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Student Perceptions of the Impact of Kinesthetics in the Choral Rehearsal

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STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF KINESTHETICS IN THE CHORAL REHEARSAL

by

Lucas G. Krogmann

A Thesis Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF KINESTHETICS IN THE CHORAL REHEARSAL

by

Lucas G. Krogmann

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2023
Under the Supervision of Dr. Sheila J. Feay-Shaw

Using movement activities, or kinesthetics, in the choral rehearsal is a studied and established teaching technique that some music educators regularly employ. The movement-based strategies have their roots in the work of Jaques-Dalcroze, Laban, and Kodály, as well as other choral pedagogues of the 20th century that have built on their foundation. However, upon literature review, few studies have been done to establish the student perspective regarding the use of movement in the choral rehearsal. Three research questions guided this qualitative, action research study: 1) Do students have a positive or negative perception of the use of kinesthetics during the choral rehearsal?; 2) Do students find the use of kinesthetics in the choral rehearsal beneficial to their vocal development?; and 3) Do students find that the use of kinesthetics impacts their understanding of the music they are learning? Student surveys, video recordings of rehearsals, and three semi-structured student interviews provided the data. Triangulation of data across these three data sources uncovered four themes: 1) active and engaged students, 2) growth in singing, 3) kinesthetic connections, and 4) occasional obstacles. While opinions were not unanimous, students generally viewed kinesthetics positively and beneficial to developing their voice. Many students also found movement helpful in their understanding of the music. Using movement activities in the choral rehearsal may not

be for everyone, but they have power to transform the choral rehearsal experience into something more student-centered, engaging, and enjoyable.

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S.D.G.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Since the turn of the 20th century, movement techniques have become an increasingly more important part of a music educator's toolbox. Early 20th-century scholars Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, Rudolf von Laban, and Zoltán Kodály utilized movement as an essential or core part to their methods and strategies (Crosby, 2008; Daley, 2013; Jordan, 2019). Jaques-Dalcroze was particularly interested in connecting rhythm to kinesthetics using movement as the way to teach music to students. Hungarian pedagogue Kodály, created an approach to teaching children that embraced movement as an important method to reinforce musical concepts. Handclapping and tapping rhythms as well as the Curwen hand signs are just two examples of how movement is used in this technique. Laban was a dance pedagogue, but recently, his analysis and movement shorthand system has been adopted by music educators, and more specifically, conductors (Jordan, 2019).

Most of the literature advocating using movement in music education is focused on the general music classroom of elementary and middle schools. Books such as *Music and Movement: A Way of Life for the Young Child*, a pre-service music educator textbook, are a prime example of this (Edwards et al., 2009). Wis (1993) shares this view as well when she stated:

Traditionally, the rationale behind the use of movement-based methods in the teaching of music has rested largely on a child development platform—that the use of experientially-based rather than verbally-based methods with children is a logical practice in light of the child's unfolding cognitive and physical capacities. While this rationale may have served elementary general music well, this same rationale may in fact explain why the use of bodily-based methods in older learners is not more common. (p. 11)

She goes on to write that because older learners, such as high school and college age students, have reached the capability to think more abstractly, there is a tendency for educators to think this age group needs to be educated on a more cerebral level (Wis, 1993).

Movement techniques, however, from the likes of Jaques-Dalcroze and Laban began to be cross-applied to other areas of study within the field of music education (Daley, 2013; Jordan, 2019). These techniques naturally found their way into choral classrooms and rehearsals as choral conductors experimented with their use. Benson (2011) stated that American choral conductors have been implementing the use of movement as a teaching strategy since the 1950s and 1960s.

Purpose of the Study

Use of movement in the general music classroom and choral classroom is well established. Studies such as Benson's (2011) and Daley's (2013) as well as the work of Jordan (2019) all explore the ways in which movement can be used in the choral context. However, in this author's review of literature, few researchers have explored the use of movement from the student singer's perspective. The purpose of this study is to explore the student singers' perceptions in the high school choral classroom of the use of movement to enhance musicianship. The guiding questions for the study were:

1. Do students have a positive or negative perception of the use of kinesthetics during the choral rehearsal?
2. Do students find the use of kinesthetics in the choral rehearsal beneficial to their vocal development?
3. Do students find that the use of kinesthetics impacts their understanding of the music they are learning?

The use of movement, sometimes called kinesthetics, in choral rehearsals puts a physical, tangible gesture or motion to musical skills and concepts. For example, specific hand gestures can be used to imitate the shape of the mouth for unified vowel sounds. The concept of using movement to help singers make deeper connections with the music they learn originated over 100 years ago with pedagogues like Jaques-Dalcroze. The literature review which follows will establish the rationale and foundation behind using movement in the choral classroom as well as some specific ways in which movement can be used during the choral rehearsal.

Review of Literature

A simple definition of kinesthetics is: “having to do with movement or sensation, especially within the body” (Dictionary.com, n.d.). For the purposes of this study, I define kinesthetics as intentional bodily movements. Kinesthetics have been used for over a century in music education having developed and changed over time. Many pedagogues have developed their own applications and techniques in a piecemeal approach taking ideas and strategies from multiple pedagogues. Some of the modern-day uses of kinesthetics have roots in the techniques of Jaques-Dalcroze (Benson, 2011; Chagnon, 2001; Daley, 2013), Rudolf von Laban (Jordan, 2019), and Kodály (Ratcliffe, 2018).

Dalcroze Techniques

Émile Jaques-Dalcroze developed his approach to music education over a century ago in 1911, when he founded a school in Hellerau, Germany to refine and explore his movement-centered approach (Dalcroze Society of America, 2019). He experimented with an approach he named eurhythmics – an educational approach to teaching music using bodily movement. Eurhythmics was part philosophy and technique based upon the idea that music and movement

are inseparable (Daley, 2013). Jaques-Dalcroze believed that the rhythms of music came from and were connected to the human body's natural motions. Jaques-Dalcroze began to explore this concept and eventually developed his own approach to music education that was based upon movement. According to Crosby (2008), "In the eurhythmics classroom, students learn to use their bodies as readily as their voices" (p. 32).

Conducting became part of the Dalcroze system that connected music to movement. Jaques-Dalcroze (1921) himself saw a natural use of his pedagogical techniques for choristers. One of the conductor's main responsibilities is to use movement, or gesture, to convey musical meaning to their ensemble. Therefore, it seems only natural that a choral conductor, or a conductor of any sort, would want to study Dalcroze techniques (Daley, 2013). While Dalcroze techniques are helpful to conductors for score study and for developing specific gestures to communicate musical ideas in a piece, these techniques also have a place within the choral classroom for singers. According to Daley (2013), "Jaques-Dalcroze imagined an embodied approach for music education, where musicians both perceive and perform music within the context of first-hand bodily experience" (p. 34). Getting the whole body moving is central to Dalcroze-style teaching and brings awareness to that movement. A simple way choral teachers might use Dalcroze technique in their classroom would be to play a piece of music and ask students to show what they are hearing (Daley, 2013).

Daley (2013) stated that, in Dalcroze-informed classrooms, "Students are encouraged to play with the materials of music, and to present individualized and creative responses to musical challenges" (p.82). Moving students from musical imitation to imagination through a bodily experience, not just a cognitive one, is the aim of Dalcroze pedagogy. An important

strategy to achieve this is physical modeling on the part of the teacher. One of the Dalcroze-trained choral educators that Daley (2013) interviewed in her study described the exchange between teacher and student this way:

When I give my examples in singing or in talking, or with my body, I am a Dalcroze teacher. Do you understand what I mean? So, they see this, they hear this, and so, I think, they integrate this, even if I don't always ask them to do the same as me... If I wasn't a Dalcroze teacher, or a Dalcroze person, I couldn't act...I couldn't do like this. If I act that a fool in front of them, or go completely 'yah!', they see that it's possible. (p. 82)

Another Dalcroze-trained teacher in this study advocated for making the choristers' encounter with music lived experiences (Daley, 2013). The way to do this is to get the students moving and active during the rehearsal. Choral conductors can do this by making intentional connections between warm-ups and the literature being learned, crafting bodily exercises to build chorister proficiency and independence with the music being learned, or animating a rhythmic figure like a hemiola with movement to experience what is happening rhythmically in the music (Crosby, 2008; Daley, 2013).

Laban Movement Analysis

Rudolf von Laban was a Hungarian artist trained in the artistic centers of Paris, Berlin, and Vienna in the late 1800s, and from early on, he had a fascination with observing and documenting movement (Jordan, 2019). He found a home in dance and founded a dance school in 1910 where he formed a movement choir, a genre favored by Laban. According to Jordan (2019), Laban "specialized in the development of a dance notation system, originally known as Eukinetics, which was published in 1928 as *Kinetography*" (p.74). Eventually this system became known as *Labanotation* in the United States.

Laban movement analysis is part of his system which was designed to analyze, and describe specific movements, and then prescribe specific instruction. According to Jordan (2019):

Laban believed that a person could recall movement experiences from earlier in life. They could (1) be helped to recall the total experience of skipping, (2) be guided to make self-analysis of his or her skipping, and (3) provide vocabulary that describes the experience of skipping to heighten the skipping experience. (p. 75)

Laban movement analysis, then, helps a person identify experiences they may have difficulty recalling and provide prescriptive movement to help teach a person to re-experience those movements that could not be recalled. These movement experiences are guided through Laban's efforts in the combination of movement vocabulary. The four efforts of flow, weight, time, and space can be combined to form a specific movement. Flow describes the amount of tension in the body ranging from free to bound. Weight describes the amount of force used, and its spectrum ranges from light to heavy. Time is the duration of a movement and can range from sustained to quick. Lastly, the effort element of space describes whether a movement has focus, and its spectrum ranges from indirect or direct (Jordan, 2019).

These efforts are used in different combinations to create the eight Laban action verbs: float, wring, glide, press, flick, slash, dab, and punch. For example, float is described as indirect (space), light (weight), and sustained (time). An action that is representative of float would be floating on your back in a pool. The other action verbs have a different combination of space, weight, and time to describe other types of movement. They also correspond with actions to which most people can relate. Twisting a dish rag is a relatable action that represents the Laban action verb wring which is indirect, heavy, and sustained (Jordan, 2019).

These eight Laban action verbs can then be strung together in different ways to originally describe a dancer's movement, but now also applied specifically to a conductor's gesture or a singer's gesture to bring about a particular style of singing. Jordan (2019) stated, "Our job as conductors should be to have at least three to five examples of each of the efforts in combination that may be commonly shared experiences for all members in the choir to connect with the harmonic rhythm of the piece being rehearsed" (p. 89). In other words, conductors can use Laban movement analysis to put specific movements into their gesture, which they can also have the singers do so that all members of the ensemble can have the same experience when making musical decisions about the pieces being rehearsed.

Kodály and Movement

The Kodály approach is a popular way of teaching music today. Developed around the ideas and research of Hungarian musicologist Zoltán Kodály, this approach to music education has held movement as integral from its inception (Ratcliffe, 2018). Houlahan and Tacka (2015) wrote a favored educational text for Kodály educators. The authors advocated for movement being used in a developmentally sequential manner that coincides with the scaffolded approach to music education they provide. Houlahan and Tacka even provided a list of sequential movements to be taught and used as a student moves through this music education approach.

The Curwen hand signs are one type of movement used in this approach, but Houlahan and Tacka (2015) also included a whole section dedicated to singing games, movement activities and improvisations. Movement is a critical aspect of the Kodály approach, and teachers that ascribe to this approach integrate movement into their music lessons regularly.

Other Choral Pedagogues' Use of Movement

Throughout the years, many Dalcroze-trained choral directors have employed kinesthetics in their choral rehearsals to help their choir learn music (Benson, 2011; Chagnon, 2001; Crosby, 2008; Daley 2013). Briggs (2020) gave many reasons as to why movement should be incorporated into the choral rehearsal including: increased student engagement, improved breathing technique, improved singing technique, improved pitch and rhythm accuracy, and singing with more expressivity.

The use of kinesthetics also allows other ways to communicate about music in the classroom (Ball, 1988). Ball suggested that music is very difficult to talk about due to its nonverbal aspects (i.e. pitch, rhythm, harmony, etc.). However, he stated that there is a connection between movement and music which is so powerful that movement words can be used to describe and talk about music (Ball, 1988). For example, words like *bouncy*, *sweeping*, *dragging*, and *bubbling* are all motion-centered words that are often used to describe and communicate musical thoughts and concepts. Action words, like the ones stated above, can be performed by students to help them learn the musical thoughts and concepts related to those actions. Utilizing kinesthetics in this manner gives a choral director a way to teach other than the traditional verbal method which engages only the cognitive or affective domain. Kinesthetics allows the choral music teacher to also engage the psychomotor domain enabling them to make use of all three of Benjamin Bloom's domains of learning (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

Hibbard (2013) advocated building from the pedagogy of people like Laban, Kodály, and Jaques-Dalcroze. Singing is a whole-body activity. Hibbard developed something she calls

“BodySinging” where singers must engage their whole body to feel and move with the music (p.46). Once the rhythm and body connection is made, then a singer can begin to use physical movements to help build vocal technique (Hibbard, 2013).

Another popular use of kinesthetics in choral rehearsals is to help teach vowel unification. Hendrickson (2011) prescribed specific hand motions that replicate the shape for five vowels – eh, ee, ah, oh, ooh. In the study, students were also asked to do things like put a horizontal or vertical hand in front of their mouth or show mouth or tongue shapes with their hand. Hendrickson’s (2011) study, overall, concluded that hand gestures did indeed help with vowel production.

One of the best reasons to use kinesthetics in the choral context is its connection to metaphor (Briggs, 2020). Much of verbal communication dealing with music lives in metaphor. A choral director might use phrases like “that phrase needs to be bouncier” or “really attack that fortissimo entrance.” These are metaphors living in an abstract world; however, kinesthetics allow choral educators and singers to connect something physical to something abstract. According to Briggs (2020), “When we transfer verbal metaphors to physical movement, our singers experience non-visual and non-tangible musical descriptions personally and physically, thus connecting with and understanding the music at a deeper level” (p. 78). This is a powerful tool that can be used by choir teachers to help singers make deeper connections than those from verbal instruction alone.

Summary

Kinesthetics are rooted in the work of Jaques-Dalcroze, Laban, and Kodály. Choral educators of the late 20th century have built upon the work of these men to bring movement

into choral rehearsals. Kinesthetics provide a unique way to communicate about music. When kinesthetics are used, educators use an efficient and effective tool to teach musical concepts through experience. The following chapter will outline the process and techniques used in this action research study to investigate the use of movement in a high school choral classroom.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

I used a qualitative research design for this action research study on the use of kinesthetic movements during choral rehearsals (Phillips, 2008). Everyday practice as a choral music educator utilizing kinesthetics in rehearsals led me to these three research questions:

1. Do students have a positive or negative perception of the use of kinesthetics during the choral rehearsal?
2. Do students find the use of kinesthetics in the choral rehearsal beneficial to their vocal development?
3. Do students find that the use of kinesthetics impacts their understanding of the music they are learning?

Data sources included surveys, interviews and video recordings for analysis and discussion.

Setting

Christian Academy is a religious, parochial high school in the Midwest. It is situated in a rural city of just over 23,000 people, with a small town feeling, situated between two urban centers. Christian Academy is a college preparatory high school that is focused on encouraging students to become future leaders in a denominational church. The school is one of the oldest high schools in the United States, with a rich choral tradition where music has been an integral part of the curriculum since its beginning.

Structure of the Choral Program

Christian Academy's music education program is structured a bit differently than most American high schools. Students are required to take a general music class each of their four years in high school. In addition to these required music courses, choir is offered as an elective for 10th-12th grade but is required of ninth grade. Choir for all grades is offered twice a week

for a 40-minute period totaling only 80 minutes of choir rehearsal per week, much less than many high school programs.

At Christian Academy there is a ninth grade choir called Chorus 1, a 10th grade choir called Chorus 2, and a combined 11th and 12th grade choir named Chorus 3. All the choirs are mixed SATB ensembles. I am the director of Chorus 1 and Chorus 2, and I also assist my colleague with Chorus 3. This action research study utilized students in Chorus 1 and Chorus 2 as I am the conductor of those ensembles.

Chorus 1 is a requirement for all freshmen, but Chorus 2 is an elective. However, due to the positive choral culture at the school, most sophomores continue to take chorus. Because most of the ninth grade students have never sung in an SATB mixed choir before, the foundations of choral singing are developed in the freshman year. For the three major concerts in a given school year, Chorus 1 and Chorus 2 sing the same repertoire and perform together for time and logistical purposes. Typically, these groups learn three pieces that they perform at each concert. These two ensembles, different yet similar, provide a framework through which to explore and examine student perceptions on the use of kinesthetics in the choral rehearsal at Christian Academy.

Data Sources

This is an action research study I conducted using a convenience sample in my own classroom, and I seek to improve my pedagogical practice through the study results. This study consisted of video recording rehearsals, a series of anonymous surveys, and semi-structured interviews with three selected students. I regularly use kinesthetics as part of my teaching style. Primarily, they are used during warm-ups where the teaching of singing technique and voice

building takes place. When appropriate, kinesthetics are also transferred to the repertoire being rehearsed. Whenever possible, I align kinesthetics in the warmups and repertoire in order to create a connection between the two.

Video Recording and Field Notes

For a period of four weeks, each rehearsal was video recorded to provide an outsider perspective to document the specific movement techniques being used and the singers' response to the employment of these kinesthetics (Adler & Adler, 1994). Each rehearsal was then viewed, and field notes were developed to document the outward representation of student's engagement with the movement techniques and changes in choral sound through their use (Emerson et al., 2011). The recording notes were coded using open-coding techniques of Saldaña (2016) and marginal notes created.

Qualitative Survey

A voluntary, anonymous survey was conducted at the end of weeks 1, 2, and 4 of the rehearsal process. Week 3 was video recorded as were other weeks, but no survey was given. This served as a rest week for the students to interrupt survey fatigue which may develop. The survey was completely anonymous as no identifying information was collected, and participation was entirely voluntary. The survey consisted of the same six questions all three weeks, but the students answered the questions based on the kinesthetic activities that were used that particular week in rehearsal. The six questions on the survey were:

1. I have read the information regarding this survey and agree to complete the survey.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. What movement activity did you feel was the most helpful this week? Why?
3. What movement activity did you feel was the least helpful this week? Why?

4. How does the use of movements or actions affect your understanding of the music we're learning?
5. Have the movement activities enhanced or diminished your singing ability? How?
6. Overall, did you like or dislike the movement activities you were asked to do in choir rehearsals this week? Why?

The number of students enrolled in Chorus 1 and Chorus 2 at Christian Academy is large, and the possible sample size was 192 singers for the anonymous survey.

Procedure. Each survey was administered during a rehearsal period for the choirs in the last five minutes. The survey was administered via my university Qualtrics account, and an access link was posted on the bottom of a student assent document which students reached via Christian Academy's Learning Management System. My colleague read an invitation for the students to participate in the survey in week one to minimize students feeling coerced into participating. In weeks two and four, the invitation was not read, and students were given the last five minutes of the second rehearsal of the week to complete the survey if they wanted. While the students that volunteered completed the survey, the author tried to seem uninterested in the students completing the survey so as to make them feel as comfortable as possible. He either attended to the video camera, turning off the recording of the rehearsal or had a discussion off to the side with a colleague.

A certain level of attrition happened over the three surveys. In week one, 83 responses were given, but three students selected *no* in response to question one concerning consent to participate. Those three responses were removed from the data set leaving 80 for analysis. In week two, there were 52 usable responses after deleting two for selecting *no* in question one. Week four had 46 responses with none having to be removed.

Qualitative Interviews

Qualitative interviews can add further voice to the student perceptions of movement activities during the choral rehearsals (Fontana & Frey, 1994). My observations during rehearsals over the four-week period and from the rehearsal recordings were used to identify three students who seemed to be enthusiastic about the kinesthetics, three who displayed a wavering attitude toward the use of kinesthetics over the study, and three who displayed a reluctance to participate in the kinesthetics during the rehearsals. Recruitment for these interviews was done by my colleague. The list of three students in each category was given to him as well as an invitation script to read to the students on the list. If one student did not wish to be interviewed, there were two other students that could be invited. After one student from each of the three categories verbally agreed to be interviewed, I obtained written parental consent and student assent. Then, I made further contact with the three students to arrange a specific time and place for the interviews.

Procedure. All three interviews were conducted in my classroom outside of regular school hours at a mutually agreed upon time. Interview questions and possible follow-up prompts were developed for the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A). A pseudonym was assigned to each of the three students to maintain anonymity in the written study. The interviews were 9-15 minutes in length and were recorded on an iPhone using the Voice Memos app before being transcribed (see Appendix B through Appendix D). Open coding was used on all transcriptions to further identify developing themes across all data points (Saldaña, 2016). Data analysis and interpretation was based on the techniques of Huberman & Miles (1994) through data triangulation from all sources (Janesick, 1994).

Summary

Information from the rehearsal recording field notes, surveys, and interviews constituted the data used in this qualitative, action research study centered in the choral classroom. The following chapters will present the data, and provide analysis and discussion surrounding the data provided by these sources.

CHAPTER THREE

Findings from Student Surveys and Interviews

Kinesthetics in the choral classroom context is the use of physical movement connected to a vocal technique or musical idea and is a well-established practice as previously indicated in the review of literature. I regularly used kinesthetics in my choral rehearsals, both in warmups and when rehearsing repertoire. In this chapter, I detail students' responses to questions about the use of movement in the choral rehearsal.

"Survey Says"

This study made use of two sources of data from the student perspective to determine the students' responses to the use of kinesthetics in the choral rehearsal: 1) an optional, anonymous survey offered to all 192 students enrolled in Chorus 1 and Chorus 2, and 2) three semi-structured student interviews. The surveys were conducted after the last rehearsal for each choir in week 1, 2, and 4. Week 1 produced 80 student responses, week 2 had 52 responses, and week 4 had 46 responses. The survey consisted of the same six open-ended questions which asked the students for their perspective regarding their experience with kinesthetics that week.

Most and Least Helpful Movement Activities

Questions 2 and 3 on the survey were opposite open-ended questions: *What movement activity did you feel was the most helpful this week? Why?;* and *What movement activity did you feel was the least helpful this week? Why?* Below, I discuss students' responses to Questions 2 and 3 in two sections. First, I discuss responses related to warm ups, and second I discuss responses related to repertoire rehearsal.

Rehearsal Structure

All rehearsals for both choruses were structured in the same way. Rehearsals can be broken down into two categories: warmups and literature. Each rehearsal began with warmups that focused on getting the body and voice ready to sing. In addition, this part of rehearsal was also used to teach vocal techniques and build the ensemble sound. This period lasted anywhere from 5-15 minutes depending on the time of year and position in the concert cycle. Kinesthetics were regularly employed in this section of rehearsal to help reinforce vocal techniques and unified choral sound.

The larger part of rehearsal focused on the literature the ensembles were preparing to perform. This is where musical notes and rhythms were learned for specific pieces of music. These pieces were then polished to include as much musical nuance and expression as possible. Kinesthetics were employed occasionally to help reinforce these musical concepts, and, whenever possible, a connection between kinesthetics from warmups and kinesthetics for repertoire was created.

Warmups. Every warmup session began with some non-phonating physical exercises. Most of these were stretches, but also included self-massage and breathing exercises. This is meant to get the students' attention, focus them on rehearsal, and prepare their bodies for singing. Overwhelmingly, the students spoke highly of the stretching exercises in their survey responses. One student spoke about how the stretching helps prepare them for chorus physically and mentally saying, "I like warmups because going straight to chorus from a desk is hard, but warmups help me loosen up." Another student had a similar thought but added, "It helps wake up my muscles and loosen my jaw to sing with better vowel sounds." One other

student noted that the stretching “woke me up and helped with tension.” Getting rid of tension was mentioned multiple times throughout the student responses. A student stated, “The stretching was helpful because it eliminated tension and allowed for better breath support.” Many other students listed stretching under question two on the survey which asked what kinesthetic they found most helpful, but they simply listed it without a reason as to why that was true for them.

Even with all the positive comments about the stretching and massage warmups, many other students had negative opinions of them in answering question three. Some students did not understand the purpose of stretching and self-massage, and its connection to singing when writing, why am I “stretching my arms because I don't really use my arms when I sing.” In a similar statement another student said, “It doesn't help my voice.” Yet another student noted that “the arm stretches were least helpful because I didn't really see any change in my singing.” While the stretches might not directly affect or improve singing, they were meant to stretch and open the rib cage to ready the upper body for singing which these students did not seem to understand.

One kinesthetic employed consistently during almost every rehearsal, was pulling the “oo” vowel from the lips. Students sang from the fifth scale degree down to the first scale degree on an “oo” vowel with rounded lips while pretending to pinch the “oo” with their pointer and thumb and pull it up and out (see Figure 1). One student noted that they felt this exercise was the most helpful in week 1, and another noted it as most helpful in week 2 in their survey responses. One student did not give a reason as to why it was helpful but the other one said, “The pulling the sound away from our mouths because it helped me visualize better.” In

question three of the survey, three students listed the pulling of the “oos” as least helpful but did not provide any reasoning as to why they thought this.

Figure 1

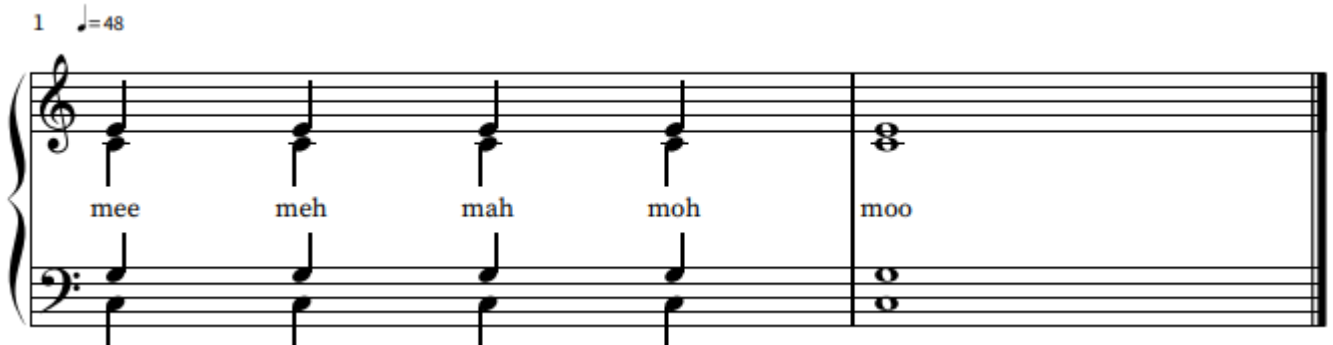
“Oo” Vowel Warmup



Another warmup that was used for building ensemble sound and vocal technique is a vowel exercise using hand gestures. The choir sings a major chord with basses singing the root, tenors the fifth, altos the root at the octave, and the sopranos the third (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

“Mee Meh Mah Moh Moo” Vowel Warmup



The students sang “mee meh mah moh moo” on the chord with a new attack for each vowel. On “mee” singers pinch their cheeks slightly to avoid a wide e vowel. On “meh” singers put a vertical hand in front of their mouth to remind them to keep a tall vowel. On “mah” singers start with hands together, one on top of the other, and then stretch the hands apart like pulling pizza dough. The bottom hand goes down and the top hand goes up, and the hands, especially

the top hand, is slightly curved to promote a tall space in the mouth with a lifted soft palate. On “moh” singers make a circle using both hands by touching the fingertips together. On “oo” the students pull the vowel from their lips as in the previously mentioned exercise.

Students seemed to enjoy this exercise, so much so that they have turned it into a student section cheer at sporting events on campus. A singular student listed this vowel exercise as being the least helpful but gave no reason why. Overwhelmingly, students saw this as a particularly helpful exercise. One student commented that, “I think it helps with our vowels and sound.” Another student wrote, “I liked the me may ma mo moo because it makes me remember how to shape my mouth when singing.” Many other students listed this vowel warmup as being the most helpful for the week but did not provide reasons why.

A warmup focusing on dynamics was used at least once in each of the weeks during the survey period. Singers were asked to hold an imaginary sound sphere by their waist with their hands. When the conductor or the music asked for a crescendo or a louder sound, the sound sphere would expand in size. When a decrescendo or softer dynamic level was indicated, the sound sphere would decrease in size. A *pianissimo* was shown by holding a tiny imaginary sound sphere in the palms with hands touching. Many students listed this as the exercise they found most helpful. A student wrote, “I liked the movements that we did to practice crescendoing and decrescendoing. They were useful to show which volume we were supposed to be at.” Another noted that “it helped explain dynamics more” to them. A student commented about being able to visualize changes in volume writing, “I think the sound sphere was pretty helpful; it allows you to connect your voice to your hands and visualize the

dynamics.” Only two student comments noted that they found the sphere activity the least helpful, but no additional reasoning was provided.

A simple kinesthetic used to help with high notes was a little more controversial amongst the students. Singers are asked to do a slight knee bend on the high note during an ascending arpeggiated warmup up (see Figure 3). It is meant to distract the brain from the high note and to help alleviate any tension on that note. One student noted, “I think it helps us reach the high notes easier,” and another wrote, “the knee bend is kinda fun to do.” However, more students listed this kinesthetic under their least helpful. Representative comments included, “I don’t feel like it does anything,” “I don’t get the point of it,” or “It feels a bit opposite to what we’re trying to achieve.” One student stated that “the high note was still unreachable” using the knee bend. Other comments noted some behavior struggles with this exercise saying, “People just mess around during it.”

Figure 3

Knee Bend Warmup

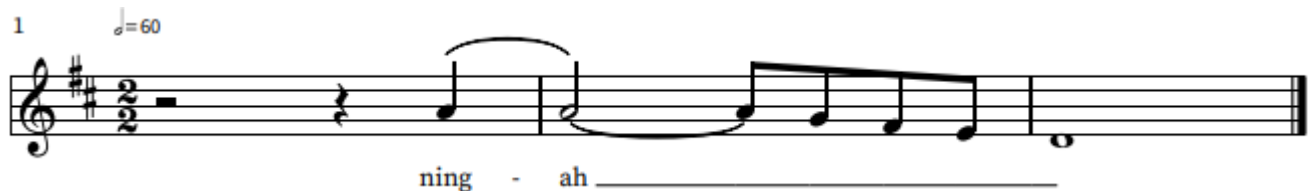


A frequently used range extension warmup consisted of starting on the fifth degree of a scale. The students sing “ning” and then attack again on the fifth degree with “ah” singing down to the first scale degree (see Figure 4). The kinesthetic for this exercise involves the students bringing an imaginary ball (i.e. football, baseball, etc.) back in preparation for throwing on the “ning.” When they attack on the “ah,” the students throw the imaginary ball up and out across

the room. This is to help with support, energy, and release of tension in order to phonate freely.

Figure 4

“Ning Ah” Warmup



This exercise was met with a good bit of positivity and negativity from the student surveys. A student wrote about this warmup helping them with energy and tension release stating, “Throwing the football helps me make sure my voice is carried out and it's not back in my jaw.” Other positive thoughts state that throwing the ball helped “in getting us [singers] to crescendo and use support” as well as noting that it “helps us [the choir] sing louder.” More students indicated that they found this kinesthetic the most helpful but provided no reasoning. However, some students disliked this exercise and found it to be the least helpful. Negative comments surrounding this exercise focus on it evoking a behavior issue and students not understanding it. One student wrote that “people made fun of it” speaking to the behavior of their fellow singers. Other students wrote comments such as, “I didn’t quite understand the point,” “It feels kind of pointless,” or “I don’t understand why we do it.”

An exercise used to ramp up singer energy and promote good breath support was the “zing zing zah” exercise (see Figure 5). On the “zings,” the singers do small circles every two notes with both hands at waist level. On the “zahs,” the singers increase the size of the circle and do larger circles over every four notes. This exercise is fast and meant to build up singers’

energy. Many students listed this as the exercise they found most helpful. One student noted, “It helps me to understand the movement of the music.” Another wrote that it “helps me feel the sound movement.” Still another said, “The movements match the sounds.” Some students listed it as the movement that was least helpful because “it didn’t benefit the sound of my singing” or “the arm circles are more confusing than helpful.” For some, this warmup may be too quick for them to coordinate their actions and singing successfully.

Figure 5

“Zing Zing Zah” Warmup



The last warmup exercise that got the most comments from students is one that works on vowels, breath support, and resonance. The students know this exercise as the “nee noh” warmup (see Figure 6). On the first group of notes the choir sings “nee” while making a large circle with both arms toward the body. On the second group of notes, the choir sings “noh” while pointing up and out with a finger. Finally, on the last group of notes, the choir goes back to singing “nee” and doing a big circle. For this exercise to be successful, the choir must have unified vowels and fill the room with sound (i.e. resonance and support). One student wrote that this exercise “helps me visualize how to push out sound and make it sound good.” Another student commented, “I like using my hands to point out when we have a higher note to hit. It distracts my brain while subconsciously reminding me where I place my sound.” Yet another

stated, “It helps me visualize projecting the sound better.” Other students also indicated that this was their most helpful warmup, but no rationale was given. For the students who indicated that this exercise was least helpful, one student wrote, “It makes me feel like I’m not doing anything productive.” One other student found it confusing.

Figure 6

“Nee Noh” Warmup



Rehearsing the Repertoire. The second, and largest part of rehearsal focuses on learning the specific repertoire that the choir will be performing in a morning chapel service or upcoming concert. In week 1 of the study, students were instructed to snap in order to teach accurate syncopated entrances. In the piece *Jubilate Deo* (Althouse, 1988), there are many syncopated entrances where there is an eighth rest on the first beat of the measure. Students were asked to snap on this eighth rest to help them accurately sing their attack on the offbeat. One student said, “It helped me feel the beat and understand when to sing.” Only a few students indicated that the snapping was the least helpful movement with one student noting that it was “distracting” as the rationale.

In week 4, students were asked to step with little feet on the beat like they were tiptoeing up to somebody to surprise them. Singers were having difficulty grasping the style of *Jubilate Deo* (Althouse, 1988), and this exercise helped them sing in the appropriate style. One

student said, “I think the little feet was really helpful because that's what I always think of when I think of the quiet yet excited singing.” No students mentioned this activity negatively.

Also in week 4, a yo-yo activity was used to help the choir sing with text stress in *Set Me as a Seal upon Your Heart* (Childs, 1997). Singers were asked to use an imaginary yo-yo. When a syllable needed stress, the hand went down. Unstressed syllables were sung when the hand was coming up. This was indicated by students as a most helpful activity, and it was not listed at all under a least helpful activity.

Lastly, in the piece *I Will Sing of My Redeemer* (Governor, 1998), students were instructed to swing their arms in a big U shape on the last stanza to feel the energy and to understand the feeling of two big beats in common time. A student indicated that this was the least helpful kinesthetic but provided no rationale. One student who described this exercise as most helpful said it helped them “feel the music.”

Open-Ended Survey Items

Questions 4 through 6 of the survey were more general open-ended questions. As the responses to these three questions were analyzed, they naturally organized themselves into three categories. Students commented on how kinesthetics helped with engagement and improvement during rehearsal. They made connections between the kinesthetics and their purpose, but students also noted that kinesthetics caused distraction and disinterest at times.

Engagement and Improvement

A theme that emerged while reading through the responses to the final three questions on the surveys was engagement and improvement. Students wrote about how they felt more engaged in rehearsal because of kinesthetics. One student said, “I like the movements because

it lets me see how you want us to sing it and it is more interactive and fun.” Another noted, “I feel more engaged.” Many students made comments about how it made rehearsal more enjoyable, and they found choir fun because of the movement activities. A student wrote, “It [kinesthetics] made it [choir rehearsal] interesting.” Still another commented, “I felt more involved.” Perhaps a statement that summarizes the comments about engagement is, “It gives me something to do other than just sit there and helps me to feel a little more active than just singing.”

Some students shared that movement activities helped improve their vocal skills. One student noted, “I like movement skills [activities] because it helps me be a better singer.” Along the same lines, a student wrote, “It helps to improve my singing technique.” One student felt the kinesthetics were driving their growth writing, “They have probably helped more than I think. They make me push myself to reach a better point.” Another student stated: “I like the movement activities, and they help me understand what the directors are asking of me to sing like in our pieces. They help a lot.”

Making Connections

In addition to noting engagement and improvement, students made comments connecting kinesthetics to the musical concepts they support. Comments like, “I like them because they help a lot with vowels and singing in a good tone quality,” were indicative of this. Many students wrote comments about how kinesthetics helped them to visualize or see what singing is like. One student wrote, “It helps me to visualize and apply what we are learning in chorus.” Yet another student said, “They helped me visualize what my voice should do.” A

student made the connection between vowels and dynamics when they wrote, “It has helped me to learn how to sing the right vowels and to practice dynamics.”

Distraction and Disinterest

A negative theme that emerged from the responses to these final three survey questions involved students becoming distracted or disinterested in rehearsal. The reasons for the distraction or disinterest were varied. One student wrote, “I’m focused on something other than singing.” This student felt distracted because the kinesthetics took their focus off singing. Similarly, a different student said, “I disliked it [kinesthetics] because it just distracted me from singing.” Another student commented showing disinterest, “Personally, I don’t think that they [kinesthetics] help me that much and time would better be spent just singing.” One student wrote about why they were reluctant to do kinesthetics sometimes when they stated, “Sometimes it’s a little awkward to do.” Lastly, one student commented on how kinesthetics can sometimes lead to behavior issues saying, “The only thing I don’t like about it [kinesthetics] is that people tend to goof off during it which can be a distraction at times.”

Student Interviews

In addition to the three surveys, I conducted one semi-structured interview with three students after the four-week survey period. I selected these three students according to their observed attitude and enthusiasm towards kinesthetics as observed in the rehearsals.

Participants

Maggie displayed a positive attitude towards kinesthetics, was consistently engaged in rehearsal, and participated in all the movement activities. Winston displayed an on-again-off-again attitude towards kinesthetics. He was sometimes engaged and participating in the

actions, but he was also observed not doing them. Lastly, George was selected for displaying a disinterest in kinesthetics. He rarely participated in the activities, and if he did, he only joined in after a few repetitions. To keep continuity with the survey results, I will break down the interview responses below into same three categories: 1) engagement and improvement, 2) making connections, and 3) distraction and disinterest.

Warmups

Of the three students interviewed, Maggie was the student that appeared most enthusiastic toward the kinesthetics. Some specific warmups she mentioned are the “mee meh mah moh moo” vowel exercise, the knee bends on a high note, throwing of the ball, and the pointing exercise on the “nee noh nee” exercise (all warmups can be seen as Figures earlier in Chapter 3). Maggie stated that the vowel exercise “affects my tone.” She also mentioned that she would “be thinking about those [the actions and shapes that go with each vowel], even if we’re not doing that exercise,” and that, “it helps me remember what shape the vowels should be and how they’re supposed to sound.” Maggie disliked the knee bend exercise stating it “feels opposite to me, and I feel like it definitely doesn’t help me.” She also stated, “I’m probably not understanding what it’s for.” She also had some positive and negative opinions about singing “ning ah” and throwing an imaginary ball. She said it “helps me focus where I should be directing my sound.” She noted that sometimes this exercise elicits some negative behavior from the male singers, “Sometimes they’re trying to hit the person in front of them or they’ll be like, ‘Oh! Look how far I threw it,’...and it just distracts me.” Maggie spoke positively about the pointing exercise helping her resonance. She said, “That helps me direct it [sound/resonance] forward.”

Winston was the student who displayed a mediocre attitude towards the kinesthetics. Sometimes he would participate, and sometimes he would not. Winston specifically mentioned the “zing zing zah” warmup with the different sized circles as one that helped him become a better singer. He noted that “the style of the way we’re singing completely changed just by making different sizes [of circles].” In addition to style change, he stated that this exercise helps with his diction. He also mentioned the “mee meh may moh moo” vowel warmup as a favorite. He said, “[It] helped with vowels a lot for me, too. I always have had a problem with not opening my mouth enough.” Lastly, Winston commented on the exercise where singers throw an imaginary ball. He likes that one because it “makes you sing louder.”

George was the student who displayed the most reluctance to participate in the kinesthetics during rehearsal. However, he found three specific warmups helpful: 1) doing a knee bend on a high note, 2) throwing an imaginary ball while singing “ning ah,” and 3) pointing up and out with a finger in the “nee noh nee” exercise. George likes the knee bend because it “helped me hit that note and get to where I’m supposed to,” meaning, accurately singing those higher pitches. He also enjoyed throwing an imaginary ball stating, “That helped me get my voice up there with that nice high pitch.” He spoke negatively regarding the pointing of the finger in the “nee noh nee” exercise. He decided that this motion “kind of felt like it was unneeded.” He went on to state, “It’s kind of too much action, and...it doesn’t really help me.”

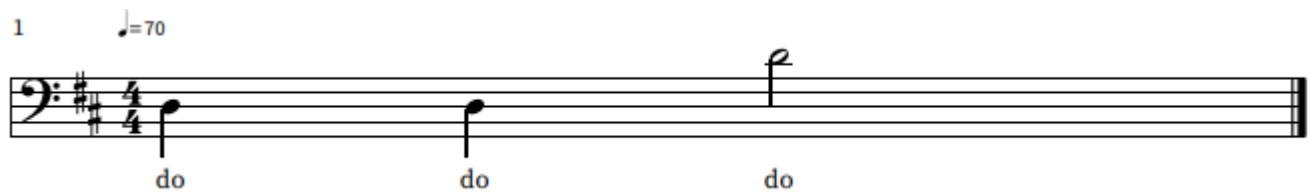
Rehearsing the Repertoire

All three students were able to mention specific movements that were repeatedly used during the warmup portion of rehearsal. However, only Maggie mentioned an exercise specifically used while rehearsing the repertoire. She remembered a specific exercise that was

done with the bass and tenor section in the semester prior to the four-week survey period of this study. The bass and tenor section had an ascending octave leap in the piece of repertoire they were learning, and they were struggling to sing it accurately. Maggie mentioned how they were instructed to sing “do do do” (see Figure 6). The boys were asked to dribble an imaginary basketball on the first two and then shoot the basketball on the third one. From the director’s perspective, it fixed the singing accuracy issue, but from the singer’s perspective, Maggie thought differently. She stated, “That one I’ve never really understood. Plus, then, the guys are like, ‘Oh, we’re playing basketball!’ and then they get crazy.” She went on to mention that the boys taking the actions too far made her not like using them.

Figure 6

Octave Leap Exercise



Engagement and Improvement

The three interviewees, like many survey respondents, found kinesthetics in the choral rehearsal beneficial to their engagement and singing improvement. Maggie found that they help get her whole body engaged for singing:

I find that if my muscles are stiff, if I’m just not doing anything, then my voice kind of gets that way too. My voice is affected by my whole body I feel like personally. So then, when we move, I’m loosening up so much. Like my voice is too.

She also says, “I think they're really helpful personally. Because in choir, I feel like we just kind of get stuck standing there. And it does help to just like, move around a little bit.” Winston

stated, "I think it [kinesthetics] makes it [choral rehearsal] more fun." He went on to say that he likes "being able to stand up and get into the actions and have fun with his friends. Winston appreciated the ability to be active in a way besides singing during the rehearsal. George has a similar thought when he said, "It [kinesthetics] definitely gets me a lot more hyped up and kind of more ready to sing."

All three interviewees also commented on how the kinesthetics improved their singing.

Maggie had many comments stating this:

Yeah, I think it affects my tone, especially. The vowel shape is a big part of it for me. Because especially when we do the "mee meh mah moh moo" exercise and the different shapes that go with each vowel. I'll be thinking about those, even if we're not doing that exercise. And so just having those that we've practiced before really helps me because it helps me remember what shape the vowels should be and how they're supposed to sound. And I think that benefits my singing overall.

Winston stated, "Overall, I think it helps the group a lot with actually doing those [kinesthetics].

I definitely can hear an improvement in our diction, vowels, projection, all that type of stuff."

He also commented about how the ensemble grows over the course of two years, "When they [singers] got here freshmen year, you started teaching us these actions and stuff, and I think that we've slowly progressed as a group throughout the years." George, even though reluctant to participate, noted an improvement due to the kinesthetics:

I've noticed a lot of change when we do these movements. I've also felt and heard a change in my voice, too. I've been able to like, have a different tone. I've been able to sing higher, lower, all that different stuff.

Making Connections

The interviewees all found a connection between the kinesthetics and the purpose behind them, or they found connection between using them in rehearsal and how that made the performance better. George made these connections between rehearsal and performance

when he said, “It does definitely help in rehearsals and pretty much everything else.” He also stated that the kinesthetics are “what we’re doing later in rehearsal.” He noted how the voice building warmups got him ready to sing the repertoire later in the rehearsal.

Winston spoke more in general terms regarding improvement. He spoke of areas that improved such as diction, vowels, and sound projection. Maggie made some profound connections in her interview. She stated:

Sometimes if you're explaining how it's supposed to sound or how you're supposed to sing, some people can't comprehend what you're trying to get to happen. And then if you include a motion, it can kind of like help people visualize what's supposed to be going on. And then sometimes, the motions, I just don't do them, and then I am focusing on my singing. But the motion is still like, in my subconscious or like: “Okay, this is how it's supposed to be.”

Each interviewee saw the benefits that kinesthetics are meant to provide in a choral rehearsal.

Distraction and Disinterest

Distraction and disinterest were topics mentioned by all three interview participants. Maggie spoke about this topic in two ways. She either did not understand why she was being asked to do the action which led to disinterest, or she got distracted by behavioral issues that arose with classmates during a kinesthetic activity. For the behavioral issues, “It just totally distracts me. It does distract quite a bit from what we’re actually meant to be doing.” At other times she said, “Sometime if I don’t [understand] then I’m trying to figure it out,” meaning she cannot focus on the actual singing happening at the same time.

George also spoke to these same points. He mentioned, “Some of them [kinesthetics] kind of felt like it was unneeded.” George also stated that “people get too much into the action and they’re really too much.” He also said some people “think that it’s pretty stupid.” I think he

is referring to how doing these actions can make one feel vulnerable, “It makes them look funny when they’re doing it.”

Winston spoke on this topic in two ways as well. He stated that “sometimes people are super crazy” and “can be a distraction from the actual singing part.” He also spoke to a reluctance to participate due to feeling vulnerable in front of peers. He said, “I just had never done any silly motions like that in choir before. I thought it was funny. I was trying not to laugh.”

Summary

Through the surveys and interviews, students expressed their opinions regarding the specific movement activities used in the choral rehearsals at Christian Academy. Overall, students commented about some specific movements used in warmups or while rehearsing repertoire. Positive and negative comments were found for each warmup. Survey responses and interviewees, however, stated that students found kinesthetics to help with their engagement during rehearsal and to improve their singing. Survey responses and the interviews also showed students connecting kinesthetics to their purpose or connecting them from warmups to the repertoire. Finally, students in the surveys and interviews noted that kinesthetics can have a negative aspect by causing distraction or eliciting disinterest for some students.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings Based on Rehearsal Videos

In the mid-twentieth century, American choral directors began to see the benefits of using movement techniques from Jaques-Dalcroze, Kodaly and Laban in the choral rehearsal (Benson, 2011; Daley, 2018; Chagnon, 2001). Briggs (2020) stated adding movement into the choral rehearsal increases student engagement, improves breathing and singing technique, improves pitch and rhythm accuracy, and allows students to sing with more expressivity. Kinesthetics also provide a common language to talk about music in the rehearsal setting. Music itself is difficult to talk about due to its non-verbal nature. However, words such as *smooth, bouncy, sweeping, marching, etc.*, are all rooted in movement and provide language to discuss the music being rehearsed (Ball, 1988).

Kinesthetics are regularly employed in choral classrooms across the nation, but how do students perceive these movement activities? The purpose of this study was to provide an answer to that question. The student surveys and interviews provided student voices on the subject, but watching the rehearsal footage provided additional assessment of the students' experience with kinesthetics.

The Rehearsal

The two choirs in this study rehearsed separately to allow for inherent instructional differences due to the level of experience with choral singing in each group. However, these choirs learned the same repertoire to be performed at the three concerts throughout the school year. Each choir rehearsed for forty minutes twice a week. A total of sixteen rehearsals were video recorded to provide the evidence for field notes and analysis in this section. The

perspective from the wider visual lens was naturally organized into the same categories as the surveys and interviews: warmups, rehearsing the repertoire, engagement and improvement, making connections, and distraction or disinterest.

Warmups

Each rehearsal began with a 5-10 minute period of warmups that were meant to prepare the body and voice for singing as well as to build vocal technique and ensemble sound. Nearly every rehearsal began with pulling the “oo” from the lips. This exercise is light and easy and is meant to get the students phonating with focus (see Figure 1 in Chapter 3). While singing, the almost all students were pretending to pinch the “oo” between their thumb and pointer finger and pull it up and away from their lips in an arc. The ones that were reluctant at first eventually joined in after a few repetitions. Every time this exercise was used the ensemble sound became unified and the “oo” vowel had good resonance.

Based upon a change in students’ posture, faces displaying interest, a true ensemble sound, and the fact that students turned this exercise into a student section cheer at athletic contests, one of the favorite warmups was the “mee meh mah moh moo” vowel exercise (see Figure 2 in Chapter 3). In the video footage, students appeared focused during this warmup. The actions were synchronized across the ensemble, the vowels were unified with rich, resonant tone, and everyone did the kinesthetics.

A kinesthetic that appeared to have mixed effectiveness was doing a slight knee bend while singing the high note on an arpeggiated range extension warmup (see Figure 3 in Chapter 3). Some students appeared to get excited and looked like they enjoyed this exercise. Others appeared disinterested. Overall, the ensemble sound had some energy to it, but the

kinesthetics were not synchronized across the ensemble. Some singers, primarily male students, overdid the action to the point where it was no longer serving a purpose regarding singing and was distracting to classmates. Even with mixed levels of participation, nearly all singers were doing some version of the knee bend.

Based on the video recordings, one of the most effective warmups was the sound sphere activity which reinforced changes in dynamics as well as promoted supported singing. For this activity, singers held an imaginary sound sphere at waist level. If the director or music called for an increase in dynamics, the sound sphere would get bigger. Decrescendos or quieter dynamics were shown by decreasing the size of the sound sphere. Initially, students appeared confused when this was first introduced. There were a lot of blank faces looking back at the director at first and limited movement. Students looked around to their peers as they made sense of the sound sphere action. Some students did not even participate in the first couple repetitions of this activity until they watched others begin doing it. After a few repetitions, more students participated in this movement activity, and the sound became more confident producing more noticeable changes in dynamics. It appeared that all singers began to participate in this exercise as it proceeded. Changes in dynamics were clearly audible, more than before, and it was evident in the sound of the ensemble that nearly all singers were focused on making crescendos and decrescendos. This exercise promoted all singers to be actively working during the dynamic changes, and holding the sound sphere at waist level promoted a supported sound from the singer's core.

The "ning ah" warmup got students excited and produced more energy in the classroom. Students sing "ning", then open to an "ah" vowel on the same pitch, and then sing

down the scale (see Figure 4 in Chapter 3). This exercise was fast, and students were asked to use the “ng” to as a springboard to the “ah.” To reinforce this with movement, singers pretended to throw a ball. They brought the ball back on the “ning” in preparation for throwing, and then they threw the ball up and out on the “ah.” During this warmup, students exhibited a mixed level of participation. Most students seemed very engaged with this exercise, but there were some singers in each voice section that appeared disinterested. A faction of those that were actively participating, mostly in the tenor or bass section, were so enthralled with this activity that their actions and the vocalizations were not in sync. Their overzealous behavior appeared to be distracting to classmates and detracted from the sound the ensemble produced. However, after stopping and calling out some of this behavior, the actions and sound became more synchronized thus producing a better ensemble sound. Overall, it seemed that singers could better match the force and style of the action to the style of singing that was required on this exercise.

Another warmup that got students excited was the “zing zing zah” warmup (see Figure 5 in Chapter 3). It is a fast exercise meant to help with breath support, flexibility, and diction. Even the male singers that seemed reluctant to do kinesthetics became excited to do the circular motions associated with this exercise. Their body language changed as their faces lit up. They looked at their classmates and exchanged animated whispers. They seemed more attentive waiting for instructions to begin this warmup. As the exercise was repeated, the ensemble sound turned lively and more rhythmically precise as the actions and singing became more synchronized. Overall, especially with the freshmen, this exercise had energy in the

sound, but it was never quite fully together and unified. The ideal sound was never achieved with this activity, but students actively participated in it.

One kinesthetic that seemed to have an immediate impact on ensemble sound was putting the backs of the hands against the cheeks with fingers pointing down while singing a descending triad. This exercise promotes resonant space in the mouth, a lifted soft palate, and an open ribcage. There was an immediate change in the ensemble sound even if all the singers were not doing this kinesthetic at first. The sound was warmer, with richer vowels, and immediately had better support behind it which also led to fuller tone.

The “nee noh” warmup was an exercise intended to bring unified vowels, resonance, and supported singing across the ensemble (see Figure 6 in Chapter 3). This exercise brought a unified, warm sound out of the group. Pointing the finger up and out on the “noh” vowel brought a brilliance with forward placement to the ensemble’s tone. The actions were perfectly synchronized with the changing sound coming from the ensemble.

Rehearsing the Repertoire

After the 5-10 minute warmup period, the rehearsal moved into work on the repertoire being learned for upcoming performances. It was a goal in rehearsal to use kinesthetics to help reinforce musical concepts in the repertoire. The section of each piece being rehearsed and the objectives of the day’s rehearsal informed when and what kinesthetics might be used. During the four-week recording period, the choirs were preparing three pieces for performance: 1) *Set Me as a Seal upon Your Heart* (Childs, 1997), 2) *I Will Sing of My Redeemer* (Governor, 1998), and 3) *Jubilate Deo* (Althouse, 1988).

Set Me as a Seal. While rehearsing *Set Me as a Seal upon Your Heart*, both choirs were asked to yo-yo in response to text stress. The hand would go down on a stressed syllable, and the hand would come up on the non-stressed syllables. After an initial minute of excitement and slight confusion over this new activity, the yo-yo was successful after a few repetitions. Phrases became more musical and nuanced as attention was given to text stress that had not been there in past rehearsals. Students were engaged, and singers appeared to have renewed interest in rehearsal.

I Will Sing of My Redeemer. In one rehearsal, the sound sphere was implemented while rehearsing *I Will Sing of My Redeemer*. Students were asked to use the sound sphere to show the dynamic changes indicated in the score as well as phrase shaping that they had been working on. The dynamic changes became more audible and noticeable while using the kinesthetic. Singers followed the conductor's gesture with more attention to phrase shaping, too. Singing became more unified, more singers seemed focused on the task at hand, and the ensemble sound improved. Participation never reached 100% using the sound sphere while singing the piece, but the vast majority of the choir were actively doing the movements.

This piece is written in common time, but as the tempo broadens a bit on the last stanza, singers need to feel the two big beats per measure otherwise the singing feels choppy. To have the choirs experience this feeling, singers were asked to make large U-shaped motions by swinging their arms. The big beat fell at the bottom of the U-shape. This instantly put that feeling of two beats into their singing shifting it away from a feeling of four beats per measure. A few male singers were noted to not keep accurate time with their classmates, but the sound of the ensemble improved. After implementing the kinesthetic in this section, the choir sang

the best iteration of the stanza employing the big beat style, nuanced phrase shaping, and skilled breath control.

Jubilate Deo. While rehearsing *Jubilate Deo* during the four-week period, three specific kinesthetics were implemented: 1) tapping across the body on the opposite shoulder, 2) snapping on eighth rests of syncopated entrances, and 3) using little steps as if creeping up to someone to surprise them. Chorus 1 was struggling to keep a steady beat, and they were asked to take a hand and lightly tap the beat across their body on an opposite shoulder. Most of the singers were observed participating and keeping the beat with the conductor. Some never kept the same beat as the conductor, but the tapping improved the issue of steady beat, and the tempo issues were mostly resolved.

Both choirs struggled attacking with rhythmic accuracy on syncopated entrances. There were multiple entrances in *Jubilate Deo* where singers had an attack after an eighth rest on beat one of a measure. To make this entrance more accurate and precise, singers were asked to snap on the eighth rest. This fixed the issue. It took several attempts, but once singers got over the initial confusion of a new movement activity, the entrances became precise and crisp unlike what they had been previously in the rehearsal footage.

The final activity observed on this piece addressed an issue with style. The composer gave a style marking of "with excitement" at the beginning of this piece. Both choirs were struggling to reach this ideal. Singers were asked, with little steps, to silently tiptoe in place on the beat as if they were creeping up behind someone to surprise them. Choir 2 got excited about this addition but could never settle down enough for the action to bring about a marked change in the sound. Chorus 1 embraced this kinesthetic, and it dramatically changed the

sound. It was noted that the singing became energetic and peppy all while the students were engaged and focused on singing.

Engagement and Improvement

Nearly every time kinesthetics were employed, students appeared more engaged in rehearsal, and the sound produced improved due to singers developing better singing technique. Singers had increased breath support, more resonance bringing warmth and brightness to their tone, and unity in sound across the ensemble. This was observed even when there appeared to be some students disinterested or distracted. If nothing else, kinesthetics appeared to reinterest students when the only activity they had been doing in choir was singing. Singing is what one wants in choir, but attaching specific movement to the singing brought a certain vitality to the choir which often led to improvement in the ensemble sound.

Making Connections

As students observably became more engaged in rehearsal, thus audibly improving the ensemble sound, it appeared that they were making connections with the kinesthetics in two ways. First, students connected the kinesthetic to its intended purpose such as realizing that the “mee meh mah moh moo” warmup (see Figure 2 in Chapter 3) was meant to help singers develop the proper vowel shapes to promote sound and tone uniformity across the ensemble. This connection was made blatant due to the improvement of singing that emerged during and after using kinesthetics. If the singers did not understand the purpose of the kinesthetic, the sound did not improve. When this happened, I reexplained or modeled again so that singers could make the connection. Second, singers connected the kinesthetics to the conductor’s gesture. As specific kinesthetics were utilized, I naturally implemented those movements into

my gesture. An example of this connection was when I implemented the yo-yo kinesthetic used to reinforce text stress into my gesture. After doing the yo-yo movement activity with the singers, the students were asked to sing again without any actions while still putting it into their voices. I then implemented the same yo-yo movement that coordinated with the text stress into my conducting gesture. Students followed with precision and accuracy and sang with text stress that was nuanced and musical. The vowel hand movements were another easy kinesthetic that could be implemented into the conductor's gesture at times to remind the choir about vowel shapes. This seamless connection between movement activities done by the students and my conducting gesture provided stronger and clearer communication between myself and the ensemble.

Distraction or Disinterest

Students indicated in the surveys and interviews that kinesthetics could bring about disinterest or distraction during the rehearsal process. This negative reaction was also noted upon observation of the rehearsal video-recordings. Some students rarely displayed an interest in actively participating in the movement activities, or they were reluctant to at first but joined in after a few repetitions. Even when the whole choir appeared engaged and actively participating, there were a small handful of people that were not doing the actions or were doing them with the least amount of effort possible. This disinterest also came and went with certain movement activities. A student that appeared reluctant to do one movement activity might be ready and eager to do a different kinesthetic in the same rehearsal. Some kinesthetics appeared to be liked by a student and some were not.

I observed distraction during the rehearsals in two ways: 1) distraction due to behavior of some singers, and 2) distraction due to confusion regarding the kinesthetics. Occasionally, singers, mostly male, got so excited with the movement activity that they took it too far and ended up acting foolish to the point where they needed to be reprimanded. There were a few times throughout the 16 recorded rehearsals where an individual or a small group of individuals had to be disciplined for making mockery of the kinesthetics and thus distracting their classmates. Most of the time, the offending students responded well to this reproach realizing they had crossed a line. They corrected their behavior and joined the movement activity again. However, this type of distraction was rare when compared with the observed improvement and engagement provided by the kinesthetics.

Second, I observed distraction as students had to work through confusion over the kinesthetic they were asked to do. There were many times, especially when the movement activity was brand new or had only been done once or twice, where the first few repetitions of the activity were uncoordinated and not synchronized producing a sound that was timid and weak. As students wrapped their heads around understanding the movement, the kinesthetic and the singing improved demonstrating understanding of the activity.

Summary

As I watched and field-noted the 16 video-recorded rehearsals, I observed many of the same items that students indicated in the interviews and survey responses. Overall, kinesthetics appeared to be a positive component bringing with them more advantages than disadvantages. The level of effectiveness of specific movement activities was noticed in the warmup and in the repertoire sections of the choral rehearsals. I saw heightened student engagement and

improved ensemble sound due to the kinesthetics. Students demonstrated that they were making connections between the kinesthetics and their intended purpose for change in the choral sound, or connecting to the conductor's gesture which also helped the ensemble. Amid all these positives, occasionally a negative was noted regarding student disinterest or distraction. Disinterest could simply be related to the singer's attitude or preferences on a given day or for the movement itself. It is fair to expect that not every student will like every movement activity. The distraction emerged either from overly excited student behavior taking the kinesthetic too far and distracting classmates, or from confusion as students worked through making sense of the movement asked of them, as well as coordinating the specific action. These negative points were minute compared to the growth, understanding, and increased engagement demonstrated in the student body language and singing.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Three research questions guided this study: 1) Do students have a positive or negative perception of the use of kinesthetics during the choral rehearsal?; 2) Do students find the use of kinesthetics in the choral rehearsal beneficial to their vocal development?; and 3) Do students find that the use of kinesthetics impacts their understanding of the music they are learning? Triangulation between the rehearsal video recording field notes, surveys, and interviews uncovered several emerging themes across all three data sources. These themes were divided into four areas for the purpose of this discussion: 1) active and engaged students, 2) growth in singing, 3) kinesthetic connections, and 4) occasional obstacles. Data from these sources illuminated student perceptions regarding the use of kinesthetics in the choral rehearsal.

Active and Engaged Students

It is clear from the data that kinesthetics encourage students to be active during rehearsal. Winston echoed this when he commented that movement activities with his friends made rehearsal more fun. Similar comments were made on the survey, and it was clear while watching the rehearsal recording that students were constantly *doing* in rehearsal when kinesthetics were used. The idea that active rehearsals increase interest among students is reflected in previous research. Active learning can be defined, in the broadest sense, as pedagogy that involves students in their learning process, and this is often juxtaposed against the more traditional lecture-based teaching where students passively participate (Culp et al., 2020). Within education circles, sometimes lecture-based classrooms are referred to as a sit-

and-get style of teaching. Active learning strategies have roots in constructivist learning theory (Bruner, 1977; Piaget, 1971).

Singing itself is a form of physical and active learning. However, students can reach a place where they may be putting forth some effort to sing, but that singing comes from an apathetic attitude or a place of being mentally uninvolved if the only active thing they are being asked to do is sing. I occasionally observed looking around the room, chatting with peers, having poor posture, and showing an unfocused attitude in rehearsal during longer periods when kinesthetics were not employed. Choral educators sometimes develop sedentary habits in rehearsal which lead to inactive and disengaged students (Crosby, 2008). Teachers sometimes refer to this phenomenon as students having “*checked out.*” Kinesthetics provide another active learning strategy – a student-centered approach that allows the conductor and singers to participate together in rehearsal (Benson, 2011). Even when there was a question about the effectiveness of the kinesthetic, there was no question that it engaged singers. There were also times when the choir appeared to be losing interest in rehearsal and then a kinesthetic was employed. Students no longer had poor, uninterested posture. They began to interact more with their peers and blank faces became filled with expression. Kinesthetics were often a morale booster, if nothing else, in rehearsal.

The foundations of Jaques-Dalcroze, Laban, and Kodály, which espouse using movement in the music classroom, are naturally active learning approaches. A goal of these approaches is to have students experience movement with their bodies. Talking about how kinesthetics activated her whole body in rehearsal, Maggie appreciated how they readied and prepared the body to sing. She noted that her voice was affected by the way her body felt, and she felt that

movement activities benefited her body and thus her voice. She supported the idea that kinesthetics affected her on a physical level but also on an emotional level. They provided a whole mind and body change.

Sandra Snow, Professor of Choral Conducting and Music Education at Michigan State University, stated; “It is not when and how you plan to use [movement], it is that you integrate it as a central feature of how we experience choral music together,” (as cited in Benson, 2011, p. 118). Movement is inherently active. Students are “up and doing” when kinesthetics are employed rather than “sitting and getting.”

Thus, the use of kinesthetics is an active learning strategy that can be applied in the choral classroom. While advocating for kinesthetic, active classrooms, Culp et al. (2020) wrote, “The environments where kinesthetic learning occur are intentionally designed to maximize success for each student through movement” (p. 11). In their article *Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue: Active Learning in the Classroom*, Krajewski and Piroli (2002) stated, “Those who tried active learning methods found that they engage students longer, are suited for students of different learning styles, are effective in teaching processes, and can be fun for students” (p. 180). Survey responses harmonized with this statement when students wrote that they felt choir was fun because of its interactive nature, or that kinesthetics made choir more active than just singing alone. All three interviewees stated that they appreciated kinesthetics because they got singers up and moving rather than occasionally standing to sing.

The quote from Krajewski and Piroli (2002) points out that active learning leads to engaged students, and engaged students positively correlates to student growth. Schlechty (2001) supports this idea:

Engagement is active. It requires that students be attentive as well as in attendance; it requires the student to be committed to the task and find some inherent value in what he or she is being asked to do. The engaged student not only does the task assigned but also does it with enthusiasm and diligence. Moreover, the student performs the task because he or she perceives the task to be associated with a near-term end that he or she values. (p. 64)

Speaking to how student engagement affects learning, Marzano and Pickering (2011) wrote, "If students are not engaged, there is little, if any, chance that they will learn what is being addressed in class"(p. 1). In the rehearsal observations, the body language of students changed when movement activities were used. Their posture adjusted, their faces displayed interest in the task, and nearly all students appeared to be doing the kinesthetics when asked. Students showed that they were active and engaged in rehearsal when using kinesthetics.

George was the student who displayed the most reluctance to participate in the kinesthetics, but he stated that movement activities get him excited to sing, noting the mind and body engagement that kinesthetics provide. Survey responses indicated that kinesthetics provided enjoyment in choir, involved the whole body in singing, engaged singers in rehearsal, and kept singers on task. Briggs (2020) claimed that a benefit of using movement in the choral rehearsal is increased student engagement. This engagement creates a connection between the teacher and student which leads to higher-level music making that goes beyond the technical and is creative and expressive (Benson, 2011).

Growth in Singing

The second theme which emerged from the data sources was the recognition and demonstration of singing growth. Students acknowledged growth in their singing abilities shown in the surveys and interviews, and this growth was evident in the rehearsal recordings. Briggs (2020) listed improved breathing technique, singing technique, pitch and rhythm accuracy, and expressivity as benefits of using movement in rehearsal. Due to kinesthetics, students commented that they understood the musical concepts they were asked to sing. Chagnon (2011) wrote that movement can provide a seamless approach to building the voice. The benefits listed by Briggs (2020) and those being revealed through this study all concern growth in singing ability for the chorister. George noted this when he felt that the knee bend helped him learn to hit high notes. Benson (2011) noted that after observing three renowned choral conductors, who integrate kinesthetics into their rehearsals, students grew in their singing in the areas of style, vocal technique, rhythm, and phrasing. Even though the three conductors observed utilized movement-based instruction in three distinct ways unique to each conductor, he still concluded that “movement was an efficient and effective rehearsal tool” leading toward singer growth (Benson, 2011, p. 78).

Many instances of singer growth were noted in the study while watching the rehearsal recordings. Activities like the “oo” vowel warmup brought a unified ensemble sound which was more resonant. The “mee meh mah moh moo” warmup, a favorite among students, also helped to bring about unified vowels as well as a rich and resonant tone. Other exercises increased singing energy such as the knee bend and “zing zing zah” warmup. Snapping on the downbeat while rehearsing *Jubilate Deo* (Althouse, 1988), immediately fixed the rhythm inaccuracy on a

syncopated entrance. Using kinesthetics with the choir brought about some positive change in singing. This is indicative of singer growth. Students recognized growth in their singing ability due to using kinesthetics as shown through survey responses.

The three interviewees also commented on the singing growth that they perceived. Maggie felt a positive change and thought the movement affected her tone. She also felt that the “mee meh mah moh moo” warmup allowed her to sing with consistently improved vowel shape. Maggie commented that she would be thinking about the actions for each vowel throughout the rehearsal. She used the motion of the vowel shape to enhance her sound. Winston, the student that displayed a mediocre attitude and interest in the kinesthetic, noted personal growth in singing, too. He specifically mentioned the “zing zing zah” warmups as effecting the style of the singing. Even George, the interviewee most reluctant to participate in the movement activities, spoke about the growth in his singing ability. He noted that the kinesthetics helped him accurately sing pitches, particularly in his upper range. Even while displaying different attitudes towards participating in the kinesthetics, all three interviewees perceived personal growth in their singing ability.

Kinesthetic Connections

The third theme that emerged was students making connections to the kinesthetics in two ways. Primarily, many of the students connected the kinesthetic to its intended purpose and matching musical concept. Secondarily, students connected the kinesthetics they were asked to do with similar movements that were implemented into the conductor's gesture. Jordan (2019) supported singers making connections between kinesthetics and the conductor's gesture since his whole premise was for students to connect a musical concept to

an action, or kinesthetic. Hibbard (2013) noted that when a singer connects rhythm and their body, then physical movements may be used to help build vocal technique. According to Briggs (2020), connecting the kinesthetic to its purpose leads students to see it as valuable:

The connection between metaphor, music, and movement is relatively simple. We use movement terminology in music to describe what we hear but cannot see. This rationale is a concept that is understandable by singers in most choirs, from elementary through collegiate levels. When teachers share this pedagogy with their students, singers feel respected and empowered with the knowledge.

The movements are perceived as a worthwhile educational and musical activity with the purpose of improving the sound and not merely as a random goofy exercise. When students understand the reason behind an activity, along with the research showing why and how it works, they will be more invested in the activity, thus enhancing the musical outcome. (p. 79–80)

Expressive, high-level performance is rooted in this deep, innate connection between the movements and music making (Hibbard, 2013).

One instance where this connection was observed was while rehearsing *Jubilate Deo* (Althouse, 1988). Students were not understanding the style of the piece which had a marking of “with excitement” at the beginning. The singing was sluggish and heavy with weight being placed on each of the four beats in the measure. The style called for the opposite of this – lightness and vitality with a feeling of two beats per measure rather than four. To experience this, singers were asked to tiptoe lightly on the two big beats of the measure as if they were sneaking up to surprise somebody. The initial attempt was met with chatter and laughing as the students got familiar with the activity. However, the ensemble connected the movement to the style, and they sang with the lightness and vitality that was required by the piece.

In similar fashion, singers were too heavy and placing too much emphasis on each beat of the measure during a rehearsal of *I Will Sing of My Redeemer* (Governor, 1998). The choir was asked to place emphasis only on the big beats of the measure by swinging their arms from

side to side in a U-shape. The bottom of the U-shape was where the big beat was felt. The sound immediately changed to reflect this big beat feel demonstrating that singers had made the connection to the purpose of the kinesthetic.

Many survey responses also indicated singers seeing the connection between movement and musical ideas. Many students commented that kinesthetics helped them to visualize the music and singing technique. One student specifically stated that kinesthetics helped them to understand unified vowels and how to produce dynamic changes. George made the connection between musical ideas being taught in warmups and those of the repertoire later in the rehearsal. A summary comment regarding this perceived connection between kinesthetics and musical ideas, stated that movement activities assisted that student in understanding how they were being asked to sing.

The second type of connection that surfaced was one from kinesthetic to conductor gesture. Benson (2001) noted Sandra Snow's use of *teaching* movements and *performance* movements. While performing, singers use muscle memory by recalling physical experiences used during rehearsal. Maggie reflected this when she mentioned that a motion helped her visualize the vocal technique or musical concept and noted that she referenced those motions in her subconscious to help her remember concepts and proper technique in moments when kinesthetics were not being applied.

A conductor can implement a similar movement that was used in rehearsal into their conducting gesture to serve as a reminder for the choir. Jordan (2019) also advocated tying movements physically experienced by the singers in rehearsal into the conductor's gesture to improve communication between the podium and ensemble. Neither the student surveys nor

the three interviews commented on this connection. However, it was observed multiple times in the rehearsal recordings. One example was the yo-yo activity used to reinforce text stress. When the singers were asked to stop making the movement and put it into their voice, I implemented a similar style of motion into my conducting gesture. The students responded with stressed and unstressed syllables as if they were still performing the action. Another kinesthetic that I regularly utilized in my conducting gesture is the vowel shapes from the “mee meh mah moh moo” warmup. If a particular vowel in a piece of literature is being shaped too widely and is not unified across the choir, the hand motions from this warmup have been utilized in the gesture. The ensemble immediately responded to this reminder from the podium and worked to fix the vowel shape and bring a uniform ensemble sound.

Occasional Obstacles

The final theme that surfaced across the data was that of occasional obstacles produced by using kinesthetics. The previous themes were all positive and perceived benefits of movement activities in the choral rehearsal. This last theme is the only perceived negative aspect that arose. These obstacles presented themselves in the form of distraction or disinterest.

Disinterest

Disinterest was noted in the rehearsal recordings by a handful of singers simply not on task or engaged with the activity. Different students were observed taking these roles between different movement activities. A student that appeared disinterested in the initial “oo” vowels warmup might be whole-heartedly engaged in the “ning-ah” warmup. George did not always participate in the kinesthetics when he felt they were unneeded. This was likely due to the fact

that he was not making the connection between the movement and its intended purpose. Similarly, Maggie rarely showed disinterest but when she did, it was due to not understanding the purpose of the movement. Survey responses indicated similar feelings from other students.

This confusion and not understanding the purpose of the kinesthetic might stem from the students' struggle to work through cognitive dissonance. Holding (2020) stated that cognitive dissonance occurs when things do not make sense in a singer's mind. This is a healthy part of learning if students are willing to work through it. But initially, cognitive dissonance might appear as disinterest, as students strive to make meaning of something that they cannot initially understand.

Another possible reason for singers displaying disinterest might lie in social phobia. According to Michels, "Social phobia, also known as social anxiety, is the fear of being watched and judged by others" (2022, p. 13). Choir is inherently social as a singer is music making with a large group of their peers. Kinesthetics is asking them to do actions on top of singing. Fear of judgement from classmates may hold students back from participating. Gren-Landell et al. (2009) found that social phobia can lead to impairment of performance in a school setting.

George spoke to social phobia when he said that some classmates feel that kinesthetics are stupid due to the way it makes them look in front of their peers. Winston initially thought some of the kinesthetics to be foolish. One student survey response said that they found the movement activities to be awkward. This social phobia was noticeable in the rehearsal video recordings, too. A student might have been struggling with social phobia when they had a look of fear on their face, refused to participate, or appeared to be looking for approval or non-judgement from their peers.

Distraction

Distraction was also mentioned as an obstacle when kinesthetics were utilized. Primarily, singers reported the kinesthetics as distracting from their ability to sing, but they also reported that classmates occasionally became overzealous with the movement activity which led to behavior problems that distracted them. Maggie mentioned that she could not focus on singing sometimes due to her trying to make sense of a kinesthetic. A few survey responses echoed this thought commenting that movement takes the focus off the singing or distracts from it. However, Menehan (2013) suggested that students just need to find the right kind of movement to move past this type of distraction.

Secondarily, students mentioned their peers becoming a distraction when they displayed excessive enthusiasm on a movement activity. This led to things getting out of hand occasionally as students got so excited, they would overdo the movements. For example, instead of doing the slight knee bend as asked, some students turned it into a competition to see who could squat the lowest. During the “ning ah” warmup where students were asked to throw an imaginary ball, a small group of students would try to throw their imaginary ball as far as they could causing them to lose balance and fall into those standing next to them. One survey response stated the only thing they did not like about kinesthetics was the tendency for some people to misbehave which was distracting. Winston echoed that same sentiment. Maggie also commented that she was taken off-task by those acting like fools. Over the course of sixteen rehearsals, the author only felt it necessary to stop rehearsal and discipline overzealous behavior five times when employing a kinesthetic.

Summary

Four themes emerged after analyzing the three sources of data: 1) active and engaged students, 2) growth in singing, 3) the kinesthetic connections, and 4) occasional obstacles. The first three are benefits, but the last is a drawback that can arise with the use of kinesthetics with this age group. Overwhelmingly, students perceived kinesthetics as something positive. Use of kinesthetics kept them active, engaged, and on-task. They recognized personal growth in their singing ability due to movement activities, and students were able to connect a kinesthetic to its intended purpose and to the conductor's gesture. Lastly, kinesthetics provided obstacles that one needs to be aware of if utilizing movement activities. Occasionally, students will have to work through confusion regarding the purpose of the kinesthetic. Also, students may become excessively excited and over-active with the kinesthetic causing distraction to classmates. The teacher may even have to intervene with discipline. Overall, students favorably perceive kinesthetics as a helpful teaching tool that can be implemented in the choral classroom.

CHAPTER SIX

Implications and Recommendations

The world of movement has much to add to the world of music. The language used to communicate about music is primarily abstract. Connecting movement with music allows educators to bring that communication from abstract to something concrete (Briggs, 2020; Ball, 1988). Movement allows students to experience those abstract concepts thus helping them to make sense of music.

Implications

This study has opened a window for choral educators to see how their students perceive the use of kinesthetics as a teaching tool in rehearsals. Students provided varying opinions on the use of kinesthetics, but overall, they enjoyed them and saw them as beneficial. Choral educators should look for opportunities to implement movement activities in their rehearsals. It engages students in a way no other technique will. Kinesthetics also are efficient. Instead of wasting time verbally explaining a concept to singers and then asking them to sing, a teacher can have the students learn that concept by experiencing it with the whole body. Kinesthetics lead to rehearsals that are enjoyable, and conductors may find that they are able to accomplish more.

In addition to helping make a connection to music, students felt that kinesthetics helped them to grow in their singing ability. Movement techniques assisted in building vocal technique. Students made the connection between the movement activities and what physically happens within the body when singing. Maggie and Winston both supported this when they spoke about how the hand movements for the different vowels helped them to know how their mouth

needs to be shaped and to remember what that feels like when singing repertoire. This voice building was a focus of the warmup portion of rehearsal, and the fruits of the work done to develop vocal technique in warmups was evident when rehearsing the repertoire. Over time and with guidance, students transfer what is learned in warmups to the performed repertoire.

I became acquainted with kinesthetics during the choral rehearsal while student teaching. My cooperating teacher handed me an article encouraging me to explore the concept. It seemed to make for a more enjoyable and effective rehearsal for both the students and the teacher. Graduate level choral conducting courses helped to solidify my understanding of kinesthetics and to better plan for their execution in rehearsals.

Using movement, or kinesthetics, in rehearsal has been a topic that has frequently been explored in scholarly literature of the past 20 years. Choral educators wishing to use movement as a teaching tool can find relevant articles published in the *Choral Journal*, a professional publication of the American Choral Directors Association. James Jordan, professor at Westminster Choir College, has published many books on conducting or rehearsal technique where he explores using kinesthetics. However, perhaps the best way to learn about kinesthetics is to watch someone who already uses them. Talk to other choir teachers in your area and observe someone who uses movement strategies. Sandra Snow's video *Choral Conducting/Teaching: Real World Strategies for Success* (2009) provides an additional option to familiarize oneself on how to implement kinesthetics in the choral rehearsal.

Occasionally, kinesthetics brought out disinterest or distraction in the students. However, this is nothing new to an educator. An English teacher will have to deal with student disinterest when a student does not like the story they are studying in class. The science

teacher will have to reprimand students that do not follow directions and attempt their own experiment during a lab activity. Managing a classroom has always been an educator's responsibility. It is possible that kinesthetics could add management struggles to a rehearsal; however, educators develop techniques to deal with those struggles quickly and move past them. Briggs (2011) gives advice on how the choral teacher should deal with these issues:

As conductors, if we understand our singers' perceptions and attitudes regarding the use of movement in rehearsal, we can use that information to change those aspects of movement in rehearsal that cause negative feelings and build upon and emphasize those aspects the students enjoy and find beneficial. (p. 30)

There will be students that do not feel like participating at times, and there will be students that overdo a kinesthetic when they are overly excited and engaged causing distraction to others. Nevertheless, choral educators are encouraged to try kinesthetics and make adjustments that best suit the needs of the students. Disinterested students may end up feeling enthusiasm from the podium and from fellow classmates that motivates them to participate. The energy of those overzealous students can be harnessed and shared with others to bring a vitality to rehearsal that cannot be achieved without the use of movement.

Although this study represents one unique school and a small number of students, it does give choral educators important insight on student perception of the impact of kinesthetics in the choral rehearsal. Movement activities are a tool that can be leveraged to improve rehearsals. As with any teaching strategy, occasional management issues may arise. Nonetheless, when kinesthetics are utilized, students are active in their learning, highly engaged, growing in their singing ability, and making connections for deeper understanding.

Recommendations for Future Research

Though this study has given insight on how students perceive movement activities in choral rehearsals, an opportunity for future research might include making modifications to the methodology. This study was completed at a small parochial school with a rich and storied choral tradition involving over 75% of the student body in the choral program. Replicating this study in other school settings would allow for a larger number of participants which might present clearer trends in student perspective. Opportunity also exists to modify the open-ended questions on the student survey. For questions two and three especially, many students listed a kinesthetic but did not provide rationale for their answer as asked. Simply making the survey a few questions longer by adding questions specifically asking for rationale for their answers to the previous question could prompt more students to provide that information. This study focused on high school students, but there are teachers that effectively use kinesthetics with middle school or children's choirs. Many educators across the country teach at both the middle school and high school level and recognize the developmental differences of the two age groups. Inclusion of this age group could provide further insight into how all students perceive the use of movement activities in rehearsal. Replicating a study where students are asked to answer open-ended questions likely would not be practical with students younger than middle school as they likely would have difficulty articulating their rationale on the survey. Using a broader spectrum of interview participants might address this issue.

An additional opportunity would be to create a quantitative study asking students about their perceptions of kinesthetics. A survey with questions asking how students feel about specific kinesthetics could be designed where students answer on a Likert scale. This would

provide concrete statistics on students' thoughts and feelings toward the use of movement in choir.

Summary

High school choral students in this study perceived the impact of kinesthetics in the rehearsal as effectively positive. Choral educators have a productive teaching tool in using movement activities. Fruits of these strategies include students that are actively learning and engaged, singers that are building their voice, and students that are making connections to deepen their understanding of choral music. Some management issues may surface when implementing kinesthetics, but these struggles are nothing surprising or unusual compared to classrooms in other areas of education. Kinesthetics provide the opportunity for choral educators to have vibrant music making that is more student-centered as they learn through activity and experience.

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APPENDIX A

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What type of movements do you remember using during a choral rehearsal to help us learn the music?
 - Follow up questions may aim to clarify what activities or movements the student is referring to.
2. Do you like to participate in the movement activities that we do in choir? Why or why not?
 - Depending on the response, follow up questions might ask participant to further explain their reasoning. Examples: Why do you feel that way about them? Is there something specific that you like or don't like about them?
3. When we do movement activities in choir, does this affect how you feel toward the rehearsal or the piece of music?
 - Follow up questions will ask the participant to talk further about this. Some example question: Why do you think it affects how you feel? How does your feeling change with the movement activities?
4. What advantages or benefits do you see to using these movement activities in the choral rehearsal?
 - Follow up questions might ask participant to clarify their response. Or a follow up prompt might simply be "tell me more" to get the participant talking about this.
5. What disadvantages are there to these kinesthetics, or movement activities in choir?
 - Follow up questions could ask participant to clarify their response. Participant might also be asked if they can give examples.
6. When we sing using kinesthetics, does this affect your singing?
 - Follow up questions might be:
 - How so?
 - What makes you say that?
 - What specific things have you noticed in this regard?
7. Why do you think movement activities are included in choir rehearsals?
 - Follow up questions might ask participant to clarify their response.
 - Example: Can you clarify that some more for me?

APPENDIX B

Maggie's Interview Transcript

Lucas Krogmann 0:03

Alright. So I'm here with Maggie doing our semi structured interview for my master's thesis. Thanks for participating.

Maggie 0:12

Of course. No problem!

LK 0:13

So, alright, I got some questions to ask. So you know we've been doing a lot of movement stuff in choir. I've been trying to incorporate it more and more throughout the year. My first question for you is: What type of movements do you remember using during some of our choir rehearsals to help us learn music?

M 0:30

Well, I especially like the ones where we would like, point, like, or for like higher notes or like we're, we're like pointing to like this. Or like, the ones where, if we're going like, flat on a note, like we just like, like, use movements to like, help remember that we got to like, bring it up more.

LK 0:48

Okay, so like, you said "the ones where we point."

M 0:51

Yeah, like this one. **does action**

LK 0:55

So the one, like you said, on high notes. So, are we talking like "ning-ah?"

M 1:03

Yeah.

LK 1:04

Like "ning-ah" and I ask you to point?

M 1:05

Or like, baseball, throw a baseball.

LK 1:07

The other one I think that we've done pointing on has been, just like, down, down five notes on "ooo." Right? Is that what you're talking about here, too, or?

M 1:15

Yeah, that definitely. And then. Yeah, and then also, just like the pointing helps me like focus, like, where my like, where I should be directing my sound.

LK 1:24

Okay.

M 1:25

Like out instead of buried. And then, like, they're really, like, the knee bends for the "vee vay vah" one. That's good, too. Yeah.

LK 1:38

Okay. Good. So my next question is then I guess, do you do like participating in these movement activities in choir? Why or why not?

M 1:50

Yeah, I actually, I think they're really helpful personally. Because I don't know, like, a lot of times, like inquire, I feel like we just kind of get like, stuck, just like standing there. And it does help to just like, move around a little bit. But then also, like, it does help me like focus on my technique. And like, how I should be singing. And, yeah, so I like them. I think they helped me.

LK 2:12

Okay. So you said that you feel like it helps your technique? Can you speak a little bit more to that?

M 2:23

Yeah, like, how's it like, just my placement helps my placement a lot depending on like, what the movement is. It just sometimes, well it just helps me keep my energy up, too, from just like standing, you know, just standing still. So the energy, the placement, that will like you know, like the way a vowel... I can't think of the word.

LK 2:47

Shape?

Speaker 2:48

Yes, vowel shape. That helps a lot too. So yeah, that kind of stuff.

LK 2:52

Okay. Is there anything you don't, like you don't like? You're very positive about this. But is there anything you're like: "Hey, I don't know if I'm necessarily a big fan of that."

M 3:05

Well, there are some where it's like, kind of just like, I don't get why we do it. So maybe that's me not understanding.

LK 3:12

Okay.

M 3:13

Like I feel like there's one where like dribbling a basketball. And like shooting it. That one I don't...I've never really understood. Plus, then like, the guys are all like: "Oh, we're playing basketball." And then they get crazy.

LK 3:23

Is that the one where I have...it's like an octave jump, right?

M 3:28

Yeah.

LK 3:29

Like it's (proceeds to sing octave exercise) "doo doo doo." That one?

M 3:30

Yeah

LK 3:31

So that one really doesn't do it for you?

M 3:33

I just don't like that one, personally.

LK 3:34

Okay. Just because it's...because it's basketball? You're just not really, it doesn't work for you?

M 3:37

It just doesn't work for me, I think. And then the basketball. Just the guys being crazy. Like aside like, yeah, like, makes me not like it so much.

LK 3:46

I get that I get that. You kind of like spoke a little bit to this next question in your kind of response last time, but maybe you can talk a little more about it. When we do these movement activities in choir, also, sometimes, like the fancy word is like kinesthetics. Right? When we do these movement activities in choir, does this affect how you feel toward the rehearsal or the piece of music that we might be trying to use them in at all?

M 4:14

Yes. And it's mostly positive. But I mean, not thinking about the choreography. But like, sometimes it's the actions just like don't really go with what like the one we're doing or the song we're working on. And it just like kind of distracts me from the actual singing sometimes.

LK 4:31

Okay. Like it's too much to think about?

M 4:34

Yeah, sometimes. But a lot of times, I like it. I kind of lost track of the question. What's the question?

LK 4:41

Like, does it affect how you feel or the piece of music or rehearsal?

M 4:45

Yeah, but then there's also that sense of like, okay, we've been sitting or standing for a really long time and it's good to move a little bit. So, it can go either way.

LK 4:53

Okay. Um, do you feel...like so you said, you mentioned like, like, sometimes, like the movements distract from the piece of music. Like, can you talk a little bit more or mentioned again or talk a little bit more about how that might be?

M 5:11

Well, sometimes I just find myself putting more emphasis on like doing the actions correctly, or whatever movement we're doing than the actual, like singing part. And then, I don't know, sometimes people around me will be like just joking about it. And then that also distracts me, which isn't necessarily like, that's not...it's just another thing to think about, in addition to the singing.

LK 5:31

Sure, do you ever feel like, like, do you feel like, you know, how the movement is supposed to connect to the musical idea? Or?

M 5:39

A lot of the time, yeah. But sometimes, like, if I don't, then I also I'm like, trying to figure it out. And then I'll be like, thinking about that instead of singing. Most of the time I get it, though.

LK 5:46

Gotcha. Okay. Like, do you feel like, like, sometimes, like, instead of doing just like one, like if I...if I came prepared with like, three different ones, and then like, maybe one of those would...would like hit home? Or?

M 6:01

I mean, that would, that would help maybe in like, the way like, how it connects, but then that's just like, that's three more things to think about.

And that's just like, kind of confusing, too. Because then you're not connecting, like just one movement to one exercise. You're connecting three. And then it's like: "Wait, which one is actually like, helping me?" I don't know. I think that'd be a lot.

LK 6:21

Yeah. And then you also mentioned something about, just like, it kind of helping break up rehearsal. Like, you know, if we've been sitting for a while, or standing for a while, and then actually doing something. Like moving right? Getting the body moving? Can you talk to a little bit about how that affects rehearsal for you?

M 6:40

Yeah, um, I find that if, like, if my muscles are stiff, if I'm like, just like not doing anything, then my voice kind of gets that way too. Like, I don't know, my voice is affected by my whole body I feel like personally. So then when we move, it's just like, I'm loosening up so much. Like my voice is, too. I don't know, I just, I don't know. Does that make sense?

LK 7:00

Yeah, no! Yeah, definitely. Definitely gets the blood flowing and keeps you loose, which is all good things for singing. Good. So now this one might, we can kind of maybe break this down into two parts if you want. But the next question, what advantages or benefits...oh it's the same thing...I read advantages, disadvantages. What advantages or benefits? Same thing, right? Do you see to using these movement activities in choir? Like, you spoke a lot to this already. But like, if you can...

M 7:38

Yeah, so the technique is, that's like, the main thing I don't know, for me, just improves the technique of singing. I don't know what else to add to that exactly.

LK 7:51

Sure. Okay.

M 7:54

It's just kind of what it is.

LK 7:56

Alright. Yeah. We can move on to the next one. Okay. So, disadvantages. Are there any disadvantages you see to using these kinesthetics in choir?

M 8:09

With it just being like, just kind of distracting sometimes, especially with high school. Just like with high school kids, sometimes it can be a really good thing to move around, but then sometimes it's just like, really distracting for some people. And then other people get distracted by the people that are distracted. And it's just kind of like, sometimes it can be a bit much, but I think if the movements are like more like minimal, they're not just like, crazy and random, which usually they aren't. So, yeah, that's the only like, it's just kind of distracting sometimes. It's the only thing.

LK 8:38

Yeah, can you tell me a little bit more about it? You can be more like more specific. Tell me more about like how others can get distracted by these. Like, what have you noticed?

M 8:48

Well, especially in the guys, especially in the bass section, actually. A lot of guys will be like, I know, there's like that...we throw a baseball one. And sometimes they're like, trying to, like, hit the person in front of them or like, they'll be like: "Oh, look how far threw it." Or like, I don't know, they're just like thinking more about the exercise than the singing itself. And then everybody else behind them or near them is like: "Oh, that was really funny" or like "What are they doing like, that's so annoying." And it just like totally, like, distracts me. I mean, it does distract me quite a bit from what we're actually meant to be doing.

LK 9:20

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I agree. I've seen that stuff too.

M 9:27

But that's not really, like, that's not really gonna change.

LK 9:30

So, okay. The next question, and I feel again, I feel like you've gotten that some of this, but if you can just repeat it and be a little more specific if you can. So, when we sing using these kinesthetics, these movement activities, does this affect your singing and the way you sing?

M 9:50

Yeah, I think it affects my tone, especially. Like, and the vowel shape is a big part of it for me. Because especially when we do like the "me meh mah moh moo" exercise and the different like shapes that go with each vowel. Those like, I'll be thinking about those, even if we're not doing that exercise. And so just like having those that we've practiced before. That really helps me because it helps me just like remember what shape the vowels should be and how they're supposed to sound. And I think that benefits my singing overall.

LK 10:17

Okay.

M 10:18

So that's good. Placement. Yeah, just not like the way like, we'll like, like, just like focus your time like the point your finger, or like. That one I really like because I have a tendency to vary my sound. And so that helps me like, direct it forward.

LK 10:35

Sure. So, you've said, you've used the word placement a couple times. Can you just like, just so we're on the same page, like, what do you mean by placement? Like, can you describe that?

M 10:46

Um, yeah, just like the, where I'm like, directing my sound towards like, my air, my sound. And like, like the word like, how much resonance there is.

LK 10:54

Okay.

M 10:55

So like, yeah, like, if it's buried there's not much resonance, and you want to be more like forward and closer to like your teeth and tip your tongue. And like, that's why like, it helps me to like, look at my finger.

LK 11:05

So that's the one where we put the finger out.

M 11:08

Yeah.

LK 11:09

And like singing to the tip of your finger kind of thing?

M 11:11

Yeah.

LK 11:12

Okay. So, you got, so far, we have vowels. Those exercises help you think about the vowel shapes and how to do that. You got the placement of your sound. Any other specific things that helps or affects your singing technique or just you're singing in general?

M 11:32

Um, so my tone. But I mean, I guess it's kind of all of that smushed together. But just like, I guess this doesn't have so much to do with movement. But sometimes you're like, you say, like, pretend you're like British. And just like, I don't know, that one really helps me for some reason. Like, I feel like that really helps my tone and it's not so much a movement, but then I can kind of incorporate that with some of the movements. And then that really, I don't know, improves my tone.

LK 11:57

Okay. So, alright. I'm gonna go to, you've spoken about how it positively affects your singing. Then you have spoken a little bit, like, can you think of any specifics negatives? Does it ever negatively affect your singing?

M 12:13

Yeah, there's a couple of exercises where it feels sort of counterintuitive to what we should be doing. And I mean, of course, I know way less about the stuff that you do. So, I'm probably just not like understanding what it's for. But like, the one that's coming to mind for me is the knee bend.

LK 12:26

Okay.

M 12:27

Is it the "ning-ah" one? No, it's the "vee vay vah" one. Yeah. And we like go like, it's a high note. But we're going down like, bending, you're bending our knees. And that just feels like so like, opposite to me. And I feel like it definitely doesn't help me.

LK 12:42

Okay. Any other? That's great. Is there any other one things like that you can think of?

M 12:47

None are really coming to mind. I mean, okay, I guess sometimes if we do like the baseball throw, I prefer the pointing. The baseball throw I feel like it's too, like, sharp. And then it, I don't know, I noticed my voice has been more like, in the "yelly" side than like the singing side.

LK 13:05

Sure. Sure. Okay. That's great. That's great.

M 13:09

Good.

LK 13:10

Um, so. So, why do you think I include movement activities in choir rehearsals?

M 13:19

Um, because sometimes if you're like explaining how it's supposed to sound or how you're supposed to sing, it doesn't always like, some people can't like comprehend, like what you're trying to get to happen. And then if you include a motion, it can kind of like help people visualize, like, what's supposed to be going on. And then it also just, it for me, it's not necessarily even like sometimes the motions I just do them and then I am focusing on my singing. But the motion is still like, in my subconscious or like: "Okay, this is how it's supposed to be." So I guess it could be that, too. If that makes any sense?

LK 13:55

No. Yeah, it does. Can you speak a little bit more like, to like, to the subconscious thing you just mentioned? Like what?

M 14:04

Yeah.

Me 14:05

Tell me more about that. Like, explain a little bit more.

M 14:08

I don't know, like something about the just the moving, I don't know. It also makes me think of like, when you say like sing from your core. All I have to do is like think "from the core" and then you say it sounds better. I'm like: "Oh, great. I don't know how I did that." It's kind of the same thing with the motions. Like if I'm doing the motions, it changes my voice, even if I'm not like, thinking of how it should be changing my voice. Yeah.

Me 14:33

Gotcha. So like if you do the actions, we do the actions, we kind of get that down. But then when we have similar things, when we don't do the actions, then you're still thinking about those actions?

M 14:43

Yeah, just thinking about that. Yeah, yeah.

Me 14:45

And that kind of helps get you in the place you need to be singing wise?

M 14:50

Mmhhmm.

Me 14:51

Good. Okay. Well, that's all I really got. That was really good stuff.

M 14:55

I'm glad!

APPENDIX C

Winston's Interview Transcript

Lucas Krogmann 0:02

Alright. So I'm here this morning with Winston. How are you doing, Winston?

Winston 0:07

Good.

LK 0:08

So we're going to talk a little bit about kinesthetics, or the movement activities, that we, that I've been using in choir the past year. So, my first question for you is, what type of movements do you remember using during choral rehearsals to help you learn music?

W 0:27

Um, so I remember the finger one with like, help with vowel placement stuff.

LK 0:36

So like the sing to the fingertip one?

W 0:40

Yeah.

LK 0:41

Okay.

W 0:41

And like projection, too.

LK 0:42

Okay.

W 0:43

I like that one. The circles one, also, that one was silly, but I definitely saw, like, I don't know what it did...but once you started, like...

LK 0:54

Which, which circle one because we have, we have the "nee-noh" where it's like circles towards you. But then we do the, um, the other one that is escaping me at the moment. The "zing zing" one.

W 1:12

Yeah. That one.

LK 1:12

That one?

W 1:13

Yeah.

LK 1:15

Okay. So what, what about that one is memorable for you?

W 1:21

Like, the bigger circles, how the style of the way we're singing completely changed I thought. Just by making different sizes.

LK 1:32

Yeah, because we start with small circles and then move to the bigger circles. Okay. You had mentioned that you, you said it was, you thought it was kind of silly at first.

W 1:42

Yeah.

LK 1:43

Can you talk a little more about that?

W 1:44

I don't know. I just had never done any, like, silly motions like that in choir before. I thought it was funny. I was trying not to laugh.

LK 1:55

Fair enough, fair enough. Any other ones? So we got...we have sing to the fingertip. We had circles, the "zing, zing, zing" circles. Any other ones that were memorable to you?

W 2:09

The "me meh mah moh moo" one. The one we turned into a cheer at the football games.

laughing by both

LK 2:18

Is it just at football games? Or is it like, is it turned into like, a student body cheer for all sporting events? Do you do it at basketball games, too?

W 2:26

I think so, yeah. So it's pretty much everything.

laughing

LK 2:30

I suppose you wouldn't really maybe know at basketball games because you're not sitting in the student section.

W 2:35

Yeah.

LK 2:36

You're on the court. So, what about those are memorable?

W 2:44

Helped with vowels a lot for me, too. I always have had a problem like not opening my mouth enough, and like, I don't know.

LK 2:53

Sure. Okay, um, the next question here. Be honest with me about this, alright? Do you like to participate in these movement activities that we do in choir? Why or why not? Or are you somewhere on the fence? Like sometimes it's fun, sometimes it's not. Tell me about that.

W 3:13

I think it depends on the day, like, I don't know. Sometimes people are super crazy with all that. But overall, I think it helps the group a lot with actually doing those. I definitely can hear an improvement in our diction, vowels, projection, all that type of stuff.

LK 3:44

Okay. Is there something specific that, like, specific that you like or don't like about that? I mean, you kind of mentioned a couple things there. Like, for example, you mentioned that some people get a little crazy. Can you talk more about that? Like, what did you mean by that: some people get a little crazy?

W 4:04

It can be like a distraction from the actual singing part.

LK 4:08

Because why?

W 4:11

Because you're doing two things at once.

LK 4:16

Do you feel like some people have a hard time handling that?

W 4:21

Yeah.

laughing

LK 4:22

That's fair enough. So then, when we do these movement activities in choir, does this affect how you feel toward rehearsal or like the music that we're learning at all?

W 4:37

Can you please repeat that?

LK 4:39

Yeah. So, when we do these movement activities in choir, does this affect how you feel towards rehearsal or the piece of music that we're learning?

W 4:50

No.

LK 4:51

Okay. Do you have different thoughts about choir, like, after we do a movement activity versus not doing any movement activity? Is it...

W 5:14

I think it makes it more fun.

LK 5:18

Okay.

W 5:19

Being able to stand up and get into the actions and have fun with your friends.

LK 5:23

Okay, so yeah. So, I'm hearing that it just gets you more active rather than just sitting there standing there and singing if there's other things. Gets the blood flowing. That kind of thing.

W 5:41

Yeah. Mmhhmm.

LK 5:42

Okay, okay. Fourth question. What advantages or benefits do you see to using these movement activities in choir? You've talked a little bit about some of them already but...

W 5:54

So just like getting up and being able to participate. It's not boring at all. I stay interested. And then I think I said some stuff already about like, diction, like, enunciation, projection. Oh! I never talked about throwing the ball one. That just came back to me.

LK 6:21

Okay.

W 6:22

Um...and...

LK 6:23

What do you like about that one?

W 6:27

Makes you sing louder.

laughing

LK 6:30

Okay.

W 6:31

Which is good usually.

LK 6:39

You've mentioned that movement activities., so these kinds of movements that we've done, you mentioned diction a few times as it helping you with diction. Can you think of...is there a specific one in mind that that, that you can think of that helps you with diction?

W 7:04

The there's the one we do the circles to the "zing."

LK 7:10

Oh, yeah. Like getting those Z's out these out?

W 7:12

Yeah.

LK 7:14

Okay. All right. Any other advantages or benefits you want to add in there before we move on?

W 7:23

That's all I can think of right now.

LK 7:24

Okay. All right. And then on the flip side, are there any disadvantages or what disadvantages are there to using these kinesthetics in choir?

W 7:42

They're not taken seriously. I feel like people just mess around instead of actually, like sing, like, sometimes just do the actions and just be goofing around instead of actually using them to improve their singing.

LK 8:01

Okay. And it's interesting that you mentioned that. So, you said if they're not taken seriously. So, in your mind, do you have to be intentional with these kinesthetics in order for them to achieve some sort of purpose for you?

W 8:28

I think you have to have like some, a little bit of musical, like, knowledge, just to be able to, like, understand what you're doing and how it should...I don't know where this is going.

LK 8:46

Yeah, no!

W 8:47

Yeah, it helps to have musical which we also learned, like, all this a lot of stuff in music class. And then in chorus, when we do those actions, like most of us students already having that

base from music class or in grade school before. I think it usually...most of us will understand and how to use his actions to improve our singing.

LK 9:16

Yeah, that makes sense. So another, like the flip side question to that would be, do you think that if somebody does these actions without intention that they're not going to get any benefit from it?

W 9:29

Well, I think they unintentionally like also can change the way you think, as well, because like, some people had never done any singing before they came to Prep. And then when they got here freshman year, you started teaching us these actions and stuff, and I think we've slowly progressed as a group throughout the years.

LK 9:56

Okay. Alright. Um, so again, you've kind of talked, you've gotten at some of what this question is asking about what? When we sing using kinesthetics, does this affect your singing?

W 10:09

Yes, very much so.

LK 10:12

Okay, can you be...can you try to describe how that...? Like how so? And you can repeat some things that you mentioned before if you want, but...

W 10:32

Just same thing with vowels, enunciation, um, all that stuff.

LK 10:49

Okay. Yeah. You said in the previous question you've mentioned that you think that the kinesthetics as a group, your class, because you're a sophomore, right?

W 11:08

Mmhhmm.

LK 11:09

So, you've mentioned that these things, since you've been doing some of these things since freshman year, they've really helped you develop as a group as an ensemble. Is there anything more that you'd like to say about that? You can say no.

laughing

W 11:25

Not that I can think of.

LK 11:26

Okay. All right. Last question, then. Why do you think that I include movement activities in choir rehearsals?

W 11:36

Make choir rehearsals more fun and engaging. To help with our vocal technique. And help follow, learn how to watch and follow you when you're directing. Um, yeah.

LK 11:59

Okay. Well, W, that brings us to the end of my questions. Is there anything more that you'd like to say about kinesthetics in choir?

W 12:10

Nope.

LK 12:11

All right. Well, thank you very much for coming in and doing this today.

W 12:13

No problem.

APPENDIX D

George's Interview Transcript

Lucas Krogmann 0:01

How you doing tonight, George?

George 0:07

Good. I'm good. How are you?

LK 0:09

Good. Alright, so I'm just gonna kind of start with question number one and then we'll go from there. Okay? So I'm going to ask you what type of movements do you remember using during choral rehearsals that help you learn the music? What kind of things have we done?

G 0:27

I remember the one, where on the knee bend, we hit the high note. That kind of helped me hit that note, honestly, and get to where I'm supposed to. Same thing with throwing the baseball in the back of the stage. That helped me get my voice up there with that nice high pitch up there.

LK 0:44

Okay. Any other ones that you can remember besides the knee bend and the baseball?

G 0:48

Not that I can remember.

LK 0:49

Okay, those are the ones that really are memorable for you.

G 0:53

Mmhhmm.

LK 0:54

Okay, and where have we done those in? Like, what part of choir rehearsal have we done those warm ups or those activities in?

G 1:05

We've done a lot of warm ups to get the boys ready, and then you've done them sometimes when we didn't do it during the rehearsal. We did sometimes in the middle of it.

LK 1:17

Oh, okay. Nice. Do you like to participate in these activities that we do? Why or why not? Be totally honest with me. If you don't, like tell me that, okay? If you do, great!

G 1:27

It's kind of fun with everyone doing it, too. Because you can hear when it's really good, but you can also hear when it's really bad sometimes.

LK 1:36

Okay! I had noticed on footage looking back, watching some of the rehearsals, that you were sometimes reluctant to do some of these activities compared to some of your other classmates. Do you do you find them uncomfortable at times? You can be totally honest with me.

G 1:55

No, I just didn't feel good that day. I wasn't ready to sing or anything.

LK 2:00

All right. Is there something specific that you like or don't like about them? Like specifically like?

G 2:10

Some of them, I kind of feel like are unneeded some of the actions that we do.

LK 2:14

Okay.

G 2:15

But most of them I feel like are pretty good for singing actions. To kind of help with the voicing and everything.

LK 2:20

Okay, I like what you said about how like sometimes you...some of them you feel are unneeded. Could you give examples of maybe some that you're like: "Meh...I don't know about that."

G 2:33

Off the top of my head, I can't think of ones, but I remember some of them where would go like that we'd go up with our fingers and then come down. Some of them kind of felt like it was unneeded.

LK 2:42

Okay.

G 2:43

Some of the ways we did with it.

LK 2:44

Sure. Go up with the fingers and come down. I'm trying to think. Are you...is that like the...where we go...we like do like the circles and then we go up and out?

G 2:57

Yeah.

LK 2:58

That one? Yeah, okay. Why? Why do you feel...like what do you feel about it seems unnecessary? Like...

G 3:05

I don't know. It's kind of too much action.

LK 3:08

Okay.

G 3:09

We just need more singing. And it isn't really, I don't know, it kind of doesn't really help me. And people just get too much into the actions and they're really too much.

LK 3:15

Gotcha. So it seems like it seems like you're saying like the actions are almost like distracting from the singing.

G 3:23

Yeah. Yeah.

LK 3:24

Is that fair?

G 3:25

Yeah.

LK 3:26

Okay. All right. Good! Great! When we do these movement activities in choir, does this affect in any way how you feel towards the rehearsal or the piece of music that we're doing?

G 3:41

It definitely gets me a lot more hyped up and kind of more ready to sing.

LK 3:44

Okay!

G 3:45

Sometimes I come in super tired, not really wanting to do anything, but some of these warm ups actually get me kind of getting into it.

LK 3:51

Okay!

G 3:52

It's what we're doing later in the rehearsal.

LK 3:56

Great. So that was like for the rehearsal overall. Can you think of any instances where it affects like a certain piece of music that we've done? Like maybe from the spring concert, a Christmas concert? I know it was a while ago.

G 4:14

Yeah. Some of those Christmas pieces got really high, had really high notes for some of the bass parts. And halfway through, some of those pieces, at the end near the Christmas concert, I could actually somewhat hit those notes.

LK 4:29

Okay.

G 4:30

And most of those other pieces I couldn't before.

LK 4:31

And you feel like the kinesthetics helped you be able to do that.

G 4:35

Yup. Mmhhmm.

LK 4:36

Okay. All right. So then, you kind of talked about some of this...but advantages, benefits? What advantages/benefits do you see to using some of these movement activities that we've been doing in choir? Do you see any or not? If you don't, you can say that, too.

G 4:58

Yeah, I don't know what it really does, but I've noticed a lot of change when we do this movements. I've also felt and heard a change in my voice, too. I've been able to like, have a different tone. I've been able to sing higher, lower, all that different stuff.

LK 5:13

Good. You said...can you think of a specific exercise? You mentioned tone. Can you think of a specific exercise that helps, that's helped you with your tone?

G 5:22

The do re mi scales for some of those.

LK 5:25

Okay.

G 5:33

I can't really think of another one right now.

LK 5:36

Okay. All right. Thank you! Um, so, on the flip side of that question, then. Do you see any disadvantages? Or what disadvantages are there to these kinesthetic or movement activities in choir? Do you see any disadvantage?

G 5:56

Some people will not participate. So they're not like, getting the whole warm up type voice ready, trying to get better. Seeing some people like are totally into it. They're ready, but some, if not most people, are just don't want to do it. And they're not looking to get better at any of this stuff.

LK 6:17

Okay, that's interesting. Do you have any insight on or any thoughts on to why they might not like them?

G 6:27

I think most of them think that it's pretty stupid.

LK 6:30

Haha okay.

Speaker 6:31

Like, it makes them look funny when they're doing it.

LK 6:34

So it's more of...just unwilling to be...just to throw yourself out there?

G 6:42

Yeah. Mmhhmm.

LK 6:43

All right, I get that. Yeah, I get that. Do you feel like...so you are a bass, right? So do you feel like when you say "some", are you referring to these people? Are you referring to like, other bases around you? Like tenors and basses as a whole? Or the choir as a whole?

Speaker 7:04

Like tenors and basses as a whole.

LK 7:05

Okay, so the guys essentially?

G 7:08

Yeah

LK 7:09

Yeah, okay. You kind of...you've answered these already, but I'm going to ask if you can be trying to describe them or be a little more specific. When we sing using some of these kinesthetics, does this affect your singing?

G 7:25

It does. It does definitely help in rehearsals and pretty much everything else. I've learned that I've so much improved from when I started this and I hope to keep singing better and just keep getting better throughout the years.

LK 7:41

Okay. Do, kind of flipping back, is there anything that you can think of that's, like, affected your singing negatively? Because you've talked about it positively. Is there anything we've done that like affected it negatively?

G 7:58

No, it's pretty much just helping to improve.

LK 8:01

Okay. Do you feel like, well, this, this kind of goes to the next question. Why do you think movement activities are included in the choral rehearsal? Like, why do you think I do them?

G 8:19

You kind of want to get everyone involved. You want to get them moving, you want to get them excited, you want to help them improve. And by having a visual aspect of it, it kind of helps them helps, um, helps their voice kind of do the same thing.

LK 8:38

Okay. And so do you think there's anything else besides the visual aspect of things? Because obviously, like you are seeing something. Was there something else involved besides the visual that you can think of?

G 8:56

No.

LK 9:00

Okay. If...the last question here. Do you feel like this is, the movement activities and kinesthetics, are something that we should continue doing? Or maybe kind of phase out?

G 9:13

I think we should definitely keep doing them.

LK 9:16

Okay. And then...can you just back that up, like, why?

G 9:21

I've definitely heard a lot of improvement from everyone. And from what I've seen these last couple of weeks, a lot of people have kind of enjoyed doing this, all this random stuff just kind of gets a little fun to it during the rehearsal and everything.

LK 9:32

Okay, so it's like, it's, it gives and brings a little energy to the rehearsal? Kind of breaks it up?

G 9:40

Yeah. Mmhhm.

LK 9:41

Okay. Well, that's my list of questions, so I guess we're done. Alright. Thanks, Geroge.

G 9:47

You're welcome.